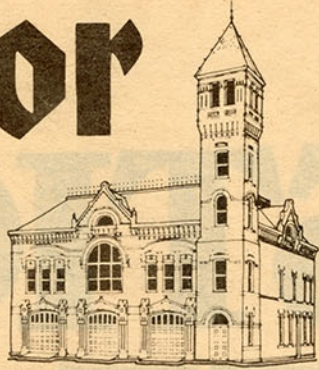


# Ann Arbor



# Observer

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

MARCH, 1978





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# Ann Arbor's High Property Taxes

*It's a major criticism Ann Arborites have of their city. But few know why the property taxes they pay are among the highest in the state.*

**T**HIS past year the city of Ann Arbor contracted with the U-M's Institute of Social Research to conduct a "survey of citizen satisfaction." The survey results suggest that Ann Arborites like their city quite well, by and large, except for two frequent complaints: the condition of roads and the high property taxes. Actually these complaints are connected: most Ann Arborites who pay property taxes think this tax is already too high, and therefore have repeatedly defeated millage proposals to repair city roads, notwithstanding dire forecasts by city leaders of what will happen to the roads in coming years if they aren't fixed soon.

Voters seem to think that because they are paying such high local taxes, there *must* be a lot of fat in the city budget which could readily be diverted to fix the streets. There is an error in this reasoning — a failure to take into account where their property taxes go. But it is an error that has had great influence on city council decisions in recent years. The unhappiness of most Ann Arborites with the amount of property taxes they pay is the fundamental reason why so little in new improvements has been forthcoming from the city in recent years — whether in road repairs, downtown parking, or faster snow-plowing. Such improvements take money, and citizens have made it overwhelmingly clear to those on city council that they don't want their taxes raised.

We took a survey of Ann Arbor citizens (52 people in all) to understand more fully how citizens feel about property taxes.\* We wanted to find citizens most likely to be knowledgeable about such taxes, so we restricted our sample to those who (1) owned property, and (2) had voted at least once in the past two years in a city election. The 52 citizens we contacted were chosen about equally from the city's five wards.

We asked the 52 first of all whether they thought Ann Arbor's property taxes are too high. The answer was clear-cut:

TAXES TOO HIGH: 47 (90%)  
TAXES NOT TOO HIGH: 5 (10%)

\*Many thanks to Elaine Selo, Peter Zetlin, and Nancy Grossman for help with this survey.

Older citizens on fixed incomes were predictably the most concerned with Ann Arbor taxes, but well over half of those interviewed seemed more than mildly concerned with the amount of property taxes they pay.

We then asked the 47 who believe taxes are too high to explain why these taxes were too high. Over one third of the 47 said they didn't know. Most of those who offered answers were vague. They spoke of excessive wages given to city employees, of too much being spent on welfare by the city, of inflation, and of the high cost of the school system. In short, we found few citizens who could explain in any detail the reasons why they believed property taxes are too high. Fewer than one fourth, we learned, have even a rudimentary understanding of what their taxes actually paid for.

Not only did we find widespread ignorance about property taxes among voting property owners, but also a surprising number of myths

about local taxes. Here are the most prevalent myths we heard.

**Myth 1: Most or all property taxes go to pay for city government.** Apparently, because the City of Ann Arbor has the responsibility for collecting property taxes, many people conclude that city hall gets most or all of these taxes. Actually, property tax revenues are split up as follows:

SCHOOLS .....	60%
CITY .....	23%
COUNTY .....	10%
COMMUNITY COLLEGE .....	4%
A.A.T.A. ....	3%

**Myth 2: City Assessors are overly eager to hike assessed valuations of Ann Arbor properties.** This myth, like the above, seems to stem from blaming the messenger for the bad news. Ann Arborites see their assessments mounting at a higher rate than ten or fifteen years ago, and so conclude that overzealous city as-

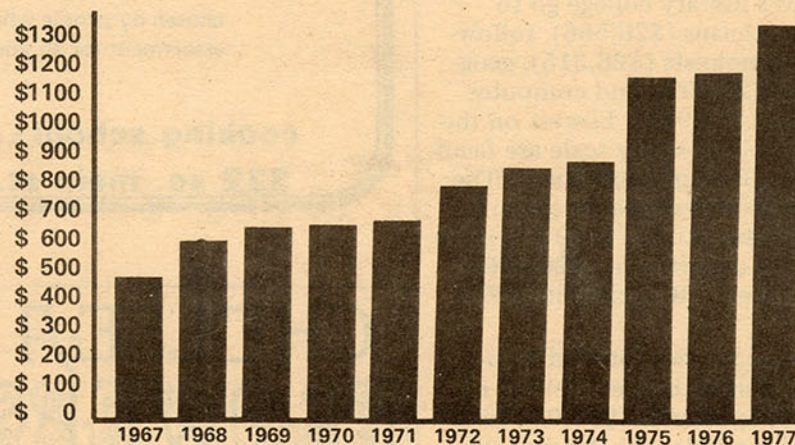
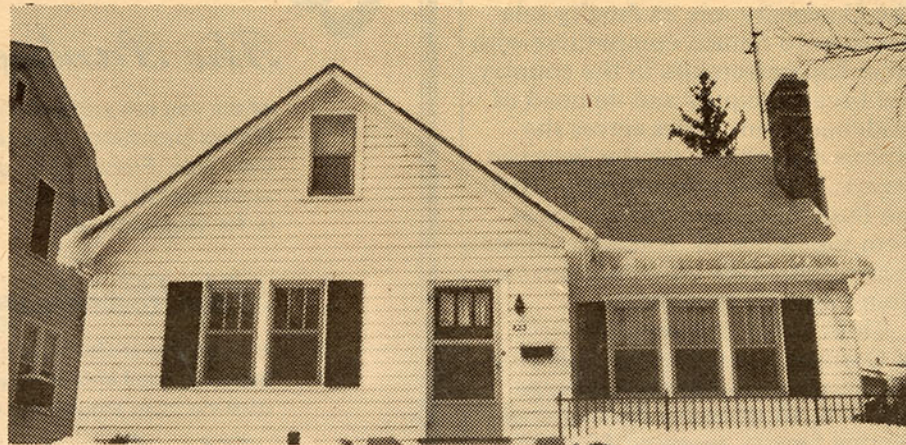
sessors are at work. In fact, assessment procedures are strictly regulated by the state, which dictates that houses be assessed at 50% of market value. The rapidly escalating property assessments in recent years are the result of sharp increases in the market value of Ann Arbor real estate. Assessments alone do not determine how much one's property tax bill will be. Assessments are multiplied times the millage rate to determine property taxes.

**Myth 3: City road repairs are mainly paid for by property taxes.** Less than 5% of road repairs have been paid for by Ann Arbor property taxes in recent years. Most of the bill has been paid for by the state's Weight & Gas Tax fund. A central reason for the road repair backlog (which is faced by most Michigan communities) is the state legislature, which has failed to raise the Weight and Gas Tax to compensate for inflation. This year, for example, it rose only 2%.

**Myth 4: Too much city taxes go to pay for welfare and other social programs.** No property taxes are currently used to pay for such programs.

**T**HE question remains: why have Ann Arbor's property taxes zoomed well ahead of inflation in the past decade? One factor is the tremendous inflation in the cost of things a city needs to buy. A State of Illinois study shows that the cost of operating a city has risen faster than the Consumer Price Index. Here is a sampling of the increases the City of Ann Arbor faced in just a two-year period:

	1971-72	1973-74
Ream of Mimeo Paper	\$ .90	\$ 1.54
Police Patrol Car	\$3,097.00	\$3,681.00
Asphalt patching (ton)	\$ 7.70	\$ 15.75
Gasoline (gallon)	\$ .14	\$ .33
Social Security (per employee)	\$ 405.60	\$ 631.80
Electricity (per street light)	\$ 76.02	\$ 96.68



Property taxes paid since 1967 by the owners of a house on the Old West Side, currently assessed at \$18,400 (half its market value).

(continued on page 18)





# Ann Arbor Items

## Road Repair: It's More Expensive Than You Think

Few people seem to have any kind of idea of the size of Ann Arbor's road repair problem. *Ann Arbor News* editorials and statements by some council and mayoral candidates imply that a million or so extra dollars a year devoted to road repairs will solve the problem. In fact, it would take over \$20 million simply to clear up the back log of roads needing repair. Because roads inevitably deteriorate with time (most have a lifespan of about fifteen years), more money in addition to that \$20 million would be needed for ongoing maintenance.

John Robbins, head of Streets, Traffic, and Parking, estimates that the only way to catch up with road repairs is to commit sufficient money to a long term repair program. He says it would take \$3.8 million in road repairs annually over a ten-year period to bring up the condition of Ann Arbor roads to an acceptable level. Currently, less than half a million dollars annually is being spent for such repairs.

## A Plan to Ease Downtown Parking

The possibility of a park-and-ride program for downtown employees is being explored by the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority. "Park-and-ride" means workers leave their cars at outlying parking lots, then take busses or trains to work downtown. Such programs do well in very large urban areas like New York City, but in small cities, demand is less certain.

So AATA surveyed 850 morning commuters and found that up to 68% of the 402 respondents would either use Park-and-Ride for sure (9.4%) or give it a try (58%), depending on reliability, location of lots and downtown drop-off points, frequency of buses, and cost. The next step, according to AATA plan-

ner Tom Hackley, could be an experimental program with one or two optimally-located lots. AATA already has an agreement with the state to use as a lot the state property at Geddes and US-23, on the busy Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti corridor. A successful park-and-ride would do much to free up downtown parking space for short-term parking.

## No Comment Department

When assistant Chief of Police Harold Olson retired last January after 32 years of service to the city, he received a nice sum for severance pay — \$29,111.25 to be exact. With an annual pension from the city of \$19,548, the former policeman seemed pretty well set to enjoy his final years.

Apparently Olson thinks otherwise. He has attempted to supplement his pension income by applying for unemployment checks, part of which would have to be paid for by the city, part by the state. To say the least, this has irked his former employers, who are fighting the application. In a letter from the city attorney's office to the Michigan Employment Relations Commission, the city argues that the application should be denied because, among other things, Olson is not actively seeking employment.

## Faculty Salaries Revealed

The U-M student newspaper *The Michigan Daily* came up with an interesting document the other day — the average salaries of U-M faculty across the various departments. The University sets its faculty salaries so as to remain competitive with other top universities in the country, and because supply and demand of academic talent varies across the various disciplines, salaries between departments vary accordingly. What the *Daily* document (which came from the Office of Academic Affairs) shows is just how much salaries vary from one field to another.

Thus, in the oversupplied field of German, salaries at the U-M (for a 9-month teaching year) average \$19,278, whereas the nuclear engineering faculty averaged \$29,385 for the same period. Top salaries in the U-M's literary college go to mathematicians (\$26,586), followed by economists (\$26,315), geographers (\$25,297), and computer scientists (\$24,956). Lowest on the literary college salary scale are faculty in the German department. The next three lowest salaries are in Near Eastern Studies (\$19,917), the chemistry department (\$20,346), and the speech department (\$20,579).

Average salaries for U-M aerospace engineers topped College of Engineering salaries (\$30,040 for a 9-month period), but this was still well below what the average law school professor receives for the

same period (\$37,336).

Medical School faculty are mostly given 12-month appointments, which average \$40,132 a year. Tops among doctors were those in orthopedic surgery (\$58,798), followed by thoracic surgery (\$56,660), neurosurgery (\$55,566), and anesthesiology (\$52,709).

Nursing School faculty are far and away the poorest paid at the U-M. They average just \$15,931 for a 9-month period.

## Signs of the Times: Are Uniforms Staging A Fashion Comeback?

What has been called "the new grooming" is being felt even in Ann Arbor. Shorter, more kempt hair for men and women; the return of the skirt on campus; occasional jackets and ties for councilmen at council meetings; and — what next? — uniforms for bus drivers. The AATA marketing department has alerted us to the new "professional image developing at the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority."

Drivers attended a fashion show put on by the Uniform Selection Committee last spring and agreed on a style: an Eisenhower-style

jacket, in navy or French blue, for men and women, with coordinated trousers or an A-line skirt. Women can choose an alternate blazer jacket. A cap or beret completes the look. Drivers are not required to order uniforms — the uniforms aren't really uniformly worn, in other words. About 1/3 of the AATA drivers have ordered and will wear uniforms at this point, with others expressing interest in the idea.



## See Council Candidates Debate in Person

The Candidates' Night for mayoral and council candidates sponsored by the League of Women Voters will be held March 23 at 7:45 in the Council Chamber, second floor, City Hall. Candidates from each ward may speak for five minutes, followed by a ten-minute period in which they answer questions submitted in writing by members of the audience.

## Ann Arbor Observer

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Susan Morales, Advertising Coordinator



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## Fuller-Geddes: No Conflict after All

The University of Michigan is not used to dealing and negotiating with other political bodies in making decisions. As a state institution it needn't follow local zoning ordinances and building codes, and it has the power of eminent domain to acquire property. So until the recent controversy concerning a plan to lessen traffic congestion on the Fuller-Geddes corridor leading up to the University Hospital, the University had never had to appear at a local public hearing.

Though the University is autonomous, it can't directly influence what local governmental units do within their own jurisdiction. On the Fuller-Geddes issue, The U-M ran up against a political body called "UATS" (Urban Area Transportation Study), a group of representatives from county-wide governmental units which has the mission of drawing up a county-wide plan for roads and traffic improvements which will determine where federal transportation funds for local use will be spent.

This winter it seemed that the UATS representatives and the University were headed on a collision course. The preferred UATS plan for easing congestion along the roads leading to University Hospital stressed parking and public transit strategies to reduce hospital-related automobile use, with limited street widenings and intersection improvements. The U-M stuck to a proposal by local planning consultants Johnson, Johnson & Roy for a four-lane widening of Fuller, which citizens criticised for violating the river-area parkland.

Now a compromise has emerged. A U-M consultant specializing in traffic problems has come up with a plan similar in most respects to the UATS plan. University administrators seemed pleased with it, as do most members of the UATS group, according to Chairwoman Marilyn Thayer. According to the compromise, a new road would join the hospital and the North Campus area, the bridge over the railroad tracks at Fuller and Glen would be relocated to the east, and Fuller Road going through Island Park would become an access road, not a through road, so fewer cars

would go through the park.

A further UATS public hearing will be held, but a potential crisis about moving the University Hospital out of Ann Arbor if the University didn't get its four-lane Fuller Road appears to have been averted.

## Free Income Tax Help

Project Community's Volunteer Tax Assistance Program will help prepare tax returns or simply answer tax questions. U-M students, trained by the Internal Revenue Service will staff drop-in service centers at the following times and locations through April 14th:

2204 Michigan Union  
M-F 11 am-1 pm  
M-Th 3 pm-7 pm  
W 56-03 U-Hospital  
T-Th 2 pm-4 pm  
Ann Arbor Public Library  
Thurs. 2:30 pm-5 pm

The service also operates a mobile unit for senior citizens or neighborhood visits. For a tax visit or further information please call 763-3548.

## U-M Enrollment Declines Slightly

The University of Michigan's Ann Arbor enrollment is 34,349 students, a decrease of 280 from a year ago.

Of the 34,349 total enrollment at the Ann Arbor campus, 21,054 are undergraduates, or 61.3 per cent of the total; 10,016 are graduate students, or 29.2 per cent; and 3,279 are graduate-professional students, or 9.5 per cent.

## Help for Domestic Violence Problems

Washtenaw County's S.A.F.E. House for battered spouses and their families in times of crisis is now open, beginning March 1, thanks to over two years of work by the N.O.W. Domestic Violence Project and many contributions of funds and assistance. (S.A.F.E. stands for Shelter Available for Emergencies.)

In emergencies victims of domestic violence can contact the Assault Crisis Center at 668-8888 for help and admission.

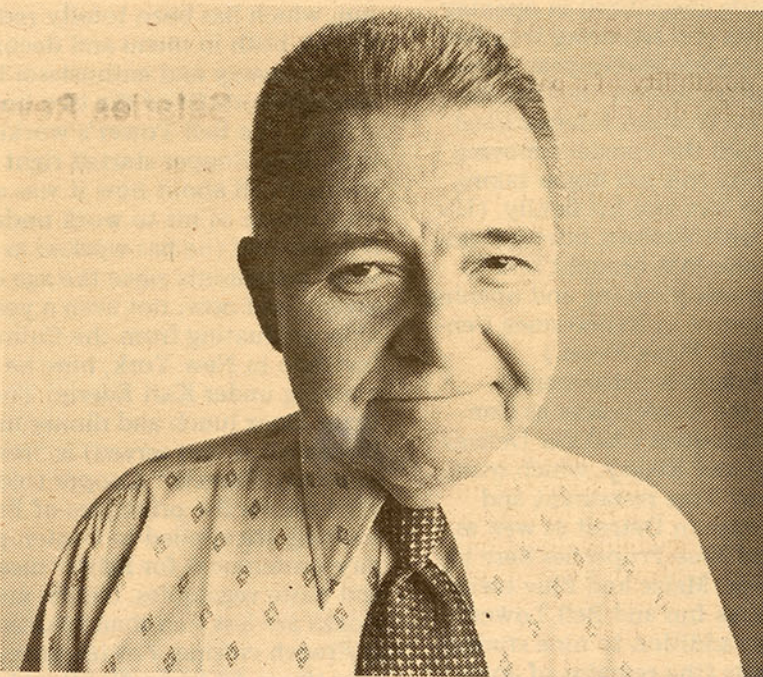
# Beauty and the Feast.

Unless your daughter gets married every day, give her a reception she'll never forget. At the Campus Inn, she'll have a superb banquet in an elegant, private dining room. Picture her on our Grand Staircase, with the flashes popping. Your daughter and our feast. They're both beautiful.



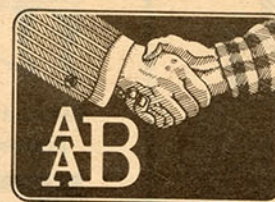
## Campus Inn

# Good news. Only three elms on our block had to go. Guess whose?



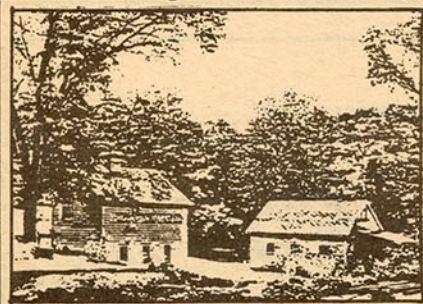
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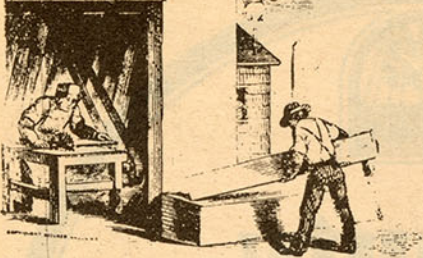
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# Changes

## The Stage Door and Victor's: Different Restaurant Concepts

Opening a new restaurant may well be one of the most pressured situations on earth. Take the usual pitfalls of any complex construction job involving new mechanical systems and appliances which may or may not perform as promised, and add the detailed planning and difficulties in ordering new food items, preparing new dishes, training a new staff and orchestrating everything so that customers can enjoy a restaurant atmosphere that's relaxed and mellow — it's a mammoth job few people can handle. A restaurant consultant must be able to come up with fresh concepts and ideas and then know how to carry them out, to the last detail of food preparation and service. Karl Ederle specialized in opening restaurants and renewing troubled ones during his twelve-year career as consulting master chef for the prestigious Western International hotels, until the constant moving required by this job began taking its toll on him and his family. (His last job with Western International and the one that brought him to Michigan was planning and opening the restaurant in Renaissance Center's Detroit Plaza Hotel.)

Now Ederle is permanently based in the Detroit area as Consulting Executive Chef for Detroit Mortgage and Realty, which owns the Money Tree restaurant and Jim's Garage in Detroit as well as Maize and Blue Properties here in Ann Arbor. Maize and Blue owns the Campus Inn and Bell Tower Hotels, in addition to nine student apartments (the remains of John Stegman's 1960's real estate empire). In March Chef Ederle is opening not one but two restaurants:



Peter Yates

In front of some of the Stage Door's theatrical posters: (standing) Stage Door Chef Mike Cooper, Consulting Master Chef Karl Ederle; (seated) Campus Inn manager and Maize and Blue V.P. Barbara Curl, Bell Tower manager Ned Barker, and restaurant manager Sally Gorenflo.

the Bell Tower's Stage Door Restaurant and Victor's at the Campus Inn, which has been totally redesigned, both in menu and decor.

The energy and enthusiasm levels among the staffs of the two hotels is high. The Bell Tower's working chef Mike Cooper started right in telling us all about how it was a life-time dream of his to work under a famous chef (he has worked in relatives' restaurants since the age of seven), and now, not even a year after graduating from the Culinary Institute in New York, here he is working under Karl Ederle! The Stage Door lunch and dinner menu (breakfast is also served) is "revolutionary French," Cooper told us. That means the principles of French cooking are applied to contemporary preferences for lighter meals and more vegetables. Sauces and stocks are less rich than traditional French cuisine. For instance, dinners (from \$6.25 to \$7.50 including appetizer or salad, vegetable and Sun Bakery bread) feature lighter dishes: a veal-rice casserole, chicken

breasts with mushrooms and artichokes, broiled red snapper with herb sauce, and thin-sliced marinated sirloin. In addition, there are several vegetarian dishes from \$1.95 to \$2.50, crepes and quiches, and a lunch-time and after-theater soup and sandwich combination for \$1.95.

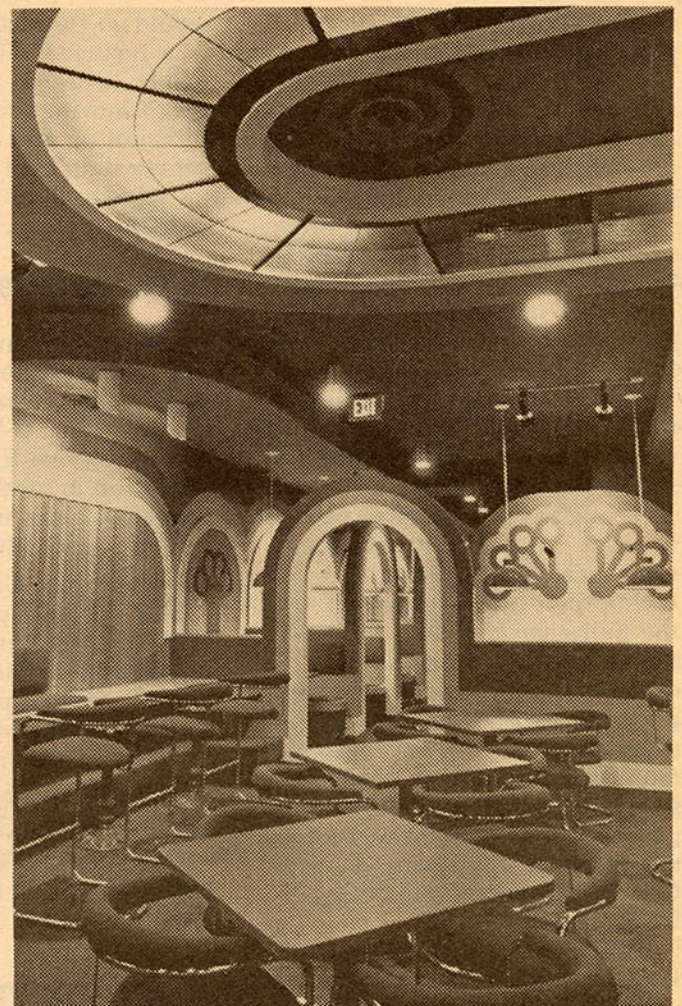
Thirty per cent of the menu has no meat, the Bell Tower's manager Ned Barker points out. He feels that there's a large and totally untapped market, especially around the university, of people who want to enjoy meatless dishes with beer and wine. Other places with liquor licenses have ignored this market.

The Stage Door's location in a busy pedestrian area with a lot of walk-in traffic has determined the restaurant's format. People in a hurry on their way to or from somewhere make for a low check average — that is, customers don't spend much. So, in order to be profitable, the restaurant must deal with that fact and aim for a high volume, with relatively fast service, simple dishes

and uncomplicated table settings.

Bell Tower Manager Ned Barker has been working on the Stage Door project for a year and a half, ever since Maize and Blue purchased the 66-room hotel building on South Thayer across from the stage door of Hill Auditorium (hence the restaurant name and theatrical memorabilia inside). It will be a "classy little informal downtown hotel," Barker says.

Ned Barker is only 29, and he looks more like a graduate student than a hotel executive. Five years ago he started working at the Campus Inn as a part-time busboy while he attended the U. of M. He became fascinated with the hotel and hospitality business and has worked in almost every hotel department, from the restaurant and kitchen to the front office and accounting. Now he's project coordinator of a restaurant and hotel renovation project that will add up to half a million dollars when it's finished next year. The staff he supervises has grown from 15 to 75 with the addition of



Peter Yates

The Stage Door Restaurant a week before its debut: John Roszpal of Hobbs & Black architects was project manager and designer.

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The name of the game in the hotel business is to have as high an occupancy rate as possible, of course. Hotels want to attract regular conferences and airline business in order to even out the seasonal lows. The Bell Tower recently landed two such plums: a five-day management seminar run by the U-M Department of Management Education for eight or twelve weeks a year, and a contract to domicile the twelve-person crew of Pan-Am's daily London-Detroit flight. Getting thirteen rooms (12 singles plus a common lounge) ready for the incoming crew 1½ hours after the departing crew has left will be a challenge, Barker says, but adds that "we are thrilled to have an international airline at the Bell Tower."

At the other extreme from higher-volume, quicker turnover pedestrian-area restaurants like the Stage Door is the "destination" restaurant. That's the direction Victor's in the Campus Inn is heading. One arrives by car — and in the evening a valet parks it in a nearby lot. One stays longer. One expects a memorable experience — fine wine, a complimentary rose for the ladies, candlelight at the tables, and so forth. In the past, Victor's has been mainly a hotel dining room, without a distinctive personality. Now it has been totally redone by Hobbs & Black architects (who also did the Stage Door). Wine-colored velvet upholstered banquettes are reflected in mirrored walls. Consulting chef Eberle has devised a menu based on classic French cuisine — what he calls "the result of centuries of catering to the royal, the rich and the famous." Today, thanks to modern methods, it's available to the not-so-rich but comfortably well-to-do. A la carte prices for entrees run from \$7.25 for Coq au Vin (chicken in burgundy wine) to \$12.95 for Icelandic Scampi (shrimp, that is — "from the cold waters of Iceland,

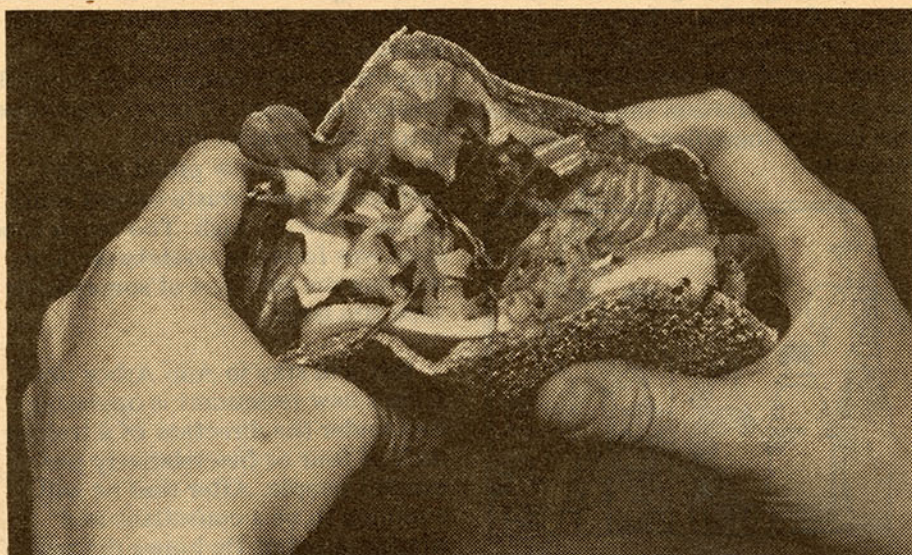
broiled on a skewer and flamed with cognac. Enhanced with Cafe de Paris butter."). Though there is one steak-and-lobster combination on the menu, less ordinary dishes are more typical — veal scallopine in apple brandy, for example, or cheese-battered sauteed veal sweetbreads, broiled lamb chops with mustard, or lobster-stuffed flounder.

Coordinating the changes at Victor's is Barbara Curl, since October the general manager of the Campus Inn and vice-president of Maize and Blue Properties. She's largely responsible for the turned-on atmosphere among the Maize and Blue employees we met. She has instituted a "participatory management" approach in running the hotels. That means that each department of operations builds its own goals, based on general goals from top management in Detroit. 1978's six main goals emerged from brainstorming sessions among management and staff members. In production-oriented manufacturing industries, such techniques of management by objectives and evaluation by performance have long been commonplace. But application of these techniques is relatively new to service industries like the hotel business, where the end product involves the treatment of people, which is harder to measure than the manufacture of goods.

A one-time home economics teacher employed by the Campus Inn since its beginnings in 1969, Curl worked in the important area of sales up to last fall, lining up conferences and meetings for the hotel.

All departments of both the Campus Inn and Bell Tower are thinking through the details of operations — how to clean rooms, how to serve food, how to cook each dish (Chef Ederle has prepared kitchen notebooks with photographs of each dish as it should appear) — and standardizing procedures to permit well-organized expansion when the time comes. What form that expansion might take, and where, and when, nobody's yet saying.

## Mainstreaming The Vegetarian Alternative At Eden Foods



Peter Yates

The chapati: Eden's competition for the Big Mac?

Another restaurant consultant has come to town to work on some gradual but significant changes at Eden Foods, the natural food store and restaurant at 330 Maynard, in the alley next to Gold Bond Cleaners. Robert Felt is a troubleshooter and advisor for natural foods restaurants, and his goal is to turn Eden's into a larger (90-seat) and more efficient cafeteria-style vegetarian restaurant that will be comfortable and appealing to people of all dietary persuasions — a restaurant to compete with McDonald's and Burger King down the street without compromising the food's nutritional value.

Eden's already offers an attractive, reasonably-priced (\$1.10-\$1.85, depending on the filling) vegetarian alternative to the Big Mac: the popular whole-wheat chapati (Indian-style pocket bread filled with combinations of vegetables, salad, cheese, and nut and fruit spreads).

The first clearly visible step in Eden's transformation has already occurred: the grocery section has moved into streetfront space previously occupied by Iseona Jewelry and Crafts, which has in turn moved into smaller quarters next door where the Arcade Laundromat used to be. The laundromat, run by the building's owner and known for the unusually high price of a load of

wash (75 cents) and large number of loiterers, has now moved back in the alley inside Eden's door.

By the end of March Eden's rickety tables and chairs will be replaced by more stable and functional new ones. Installing new stoves and food preparation equipment will take a few months, and then the present steam tables will be replaced for better temperature control to avoid overcooking. The store and restaurant will eventually be carpeted, and the store will carry fresh vegetables.

The natural foods scene is notoriously fragmented, full of politics — mostly negative politics — passion, idealism, commitment, and frequent exaggeration and hype. The field is also prone to commercial exploitation. Today, as the word "natural foods" has replaced "new and improved" on cereal boxes across the country, the term "natural foods" has become virtually meaningless.

Robert Felt has thought a lot about food. Here's his approach to "natural food," in the easy-going but incisive style that seems characteristic of his personality: Food consists of grains and seeds, beans, vegetables and fruit. (That definition, you'll notice, leaves out a lot: meat, milk products, and spices.) Milk and cheese are acceptable fun foods, for pleasure, but not staple diet items. Fish and seafood can be good food, too. Grains, beans

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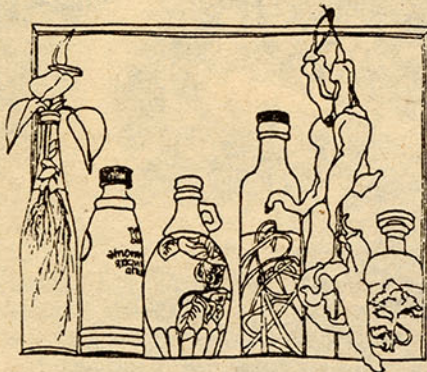
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# Changes/Continued

and vegetables are delicious for everyone if prepared effectively. But often they are overprocessed or overcooked. Mashing, juicing, and overcooking destroy cells and nutrients. Casseroles, a favorite vegetarian standby, are usually both overprepared and overcooked. Proper food preparation should emphasize quality ingredients and basic methods.



That's the food philosophy taught at the Seventh Inn Work Study program, a not-yet-accredited new cooking school run as an adjunct to the Seventh Inn Restaurant in Boston. Felt helped start the program along with famed Japanese master chef Hiroshi Hyashi, who himself turned the Seventh Inn from a money-losing business into a large and successful natural food restaurant which last year was rated by the Boston Globe as one of the twenty best restaurants in the Northeast. The Japanese cooking introduced by Hyashi, modified with American feedback, has resulted in what's known as the Seventh Inn style of cooking. Ingredients are selected with great care and prepared simply but precisely so that each separate ingredient retains its own character. Jamie Dansicker and James Fuchs of Turtle Island Restaurant are among the Seventh Inn graduates who are now opening restaurants across the country.

Proper food preparation in the Seventh Inn style begins with quality ingredients and basic methods. Students learn to cook in a 5-year work-study program according to a strict progression of skills, starting with chopping, which is done with a thin Japanese knife so it breaks fewer cells. First they chop ingredients and prepare salads. Then they move up to broiling fish. Later they fry tempura in unrefined oil. At this point they are short order cooks, then cooks, then buyers, and finally they learn management techniques.

These principles of food preparation with some modifications are being applied at Eden's. They are quite a departure in some respects from the way Eden's has been. Eden's style was more the "cook good things together in a hearty mix" casserole school of cooking. Decisions were made collectively at open meetings, so, according to the shared egalitarian ethos, everyone took turns at the interesting jobs and the dirty ones. The food was inconsistent even according to Eden's most devoted fans, because

today's cook may have been yesterday's dishwasher, and few employees had a chance to become expert at anything. A delicacy under one cook might be a disaster in the hands of the next. Staff turnover was high because of fluid lifestyles. Steam trays with poor temperature control cooked melanges of many vegetables into homogeneous mush. Despite Eden's low profit margin, inefficiency and waste caused some prices to be too high. Too much food was found in wastebaskets, indicating the portions of some dishes were too large.

Felt will stay in Ann Arbor until Eden's new restaurant is operating well under the direction of a trained staff of four or five relatively permanent people. After that he will continue to be a consultant and trouble-shooter. He hopes the restaurant and store can eventually support a 4-5 person managerial staff on a salary comfortable enough to raise a family on. This would give the necessary continuity and concern for the details of operation. "Part-time mentality" can be a great detriment to small businesses run on a tight budget, according to Felt. When pay is barely above the minimum wage, employees naturally move on.

At this time Eden already has several experienced and responsible people who could form the core of permanent staff: baker Tom Kenney, kitchen supervisor Betsy Kiel, and buyers Claudia Cines and Charlie Nelson, who research and screen products coming into the store. Mike Potter and Tim Redman continue to own Eden Foods; they work primarily at the warehouse in the food wholesaling part of the business.

It will take a while for the change-over at Eden to be complete. Possibly it will be done by June. Some things — the chapati selection, for instance — won't change at all. Generally the menu will be simplified. Saetan, a Japanese and Chinese wheat protein, will be introduced as an ingredient. Some prices will go down as methods become more efficient. Meal tickets and student discounts will be introduced. The result, Felt hopes, will be a natural foods cafeteria inexpensive enough for everyday eating and attractive enough to appeal to a wider clientele.

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Marty's Men's Fashion Clothing, 310 S. State, is in the process of expanding next door into the space formerly occupied by B. McGarry women's shoes and clothing store. Burton and Helen McGarry have retired. Marty's owner Marty Busch plans to knock out a wall between the buildings and expand his lines of men's clothing and sportswear. A 1000-square-foot women's department featuring classic tailored clothing will be on the lower level of the new space. Target date for completion: September 1. Eventually, Busch says, the new section will have a milled oak front and leaded glass windows to harmonize with his existing storefront.

Pets and Plants, in the tiny shop attached to a house on Fifth Avenue near Liberty, stocks birds, tropical fish and succulent plants. It's downtown's only pet store, but up to now it has been closed more of the time than open. Starting this month, however, store owner Roger Keller tells us it will be open regularly, thanks to a recent influx of working capital. Presently some peach-faced lovebirds and zebra finches inhabit the shop, as well as a general assortment of tropical fish. In a month the store should be fully stocked. Keller is an expert plantsman, we're told, who teaches horticulture classes at the Ann Arbor "Y."



The parking lot at Ashley and Liberty, next to Hertler's, will be redesigned and landscaped for Hertler's use by some time this summer. Places for seven cars will remain. The small concrete block building recently occupied by Moseley's Typewriter Repair will be removed for the eventual sales lot, where bedding plants and bulk merchandise will be sold. Fast-growing trees will be planted alongside the old Union Hall at the rear of the lot, with flowering shrubs along the Liberty Street retaining wall. The shrubs will be chosen for their scent and attractiveness to wildlife, according to owner Mark Hodesh. He is encouraged by the number of goldfinches and other rustic-natured birds he's been able to attract with bird feeders at his downtown home on North Division. With persistence he can attract a similar variety of birds at the store, he hopes.



At Goodyear's department store on Main Street, the major first floor renovation will be finished some time before March 10, in time for a week-long pre-Easter open house featuring, among other things, ethnic crafts demonstrations (including Ukrainian egg dyeing and Polish paper cutting). The general principle behind the remodeling is to create a more open atmosphere by removing islands of high behind-the-

counter cases in the glove and hosiery department and by using new beige carpeting throughout. A display window in the junior shop will be remodeled to provide more sales space and a view from the street into the store. Merchandising stock levels have been increased considerably.

Get Frocked and The Bead Bag, Cynthia Shevel's two State Street shops, have been closed so that their owner can concentrate on her major concern, Middle Earth, the gift, jewelry and crafts shop on South University. Get Frocked sold natural-fabric imported clothing. The Bead Bag dealt in beads and trimmings for do-it-yourself jewelry makers. With Get Frocked's departure and the abrupt closing of Little Things in January, the campus is without a store specializing in the loose, often peasant-inspired cotton clothes which were popular among students half a decade ago.

In many ways the Bead Bag was a shopkeeper's nightmare. It involved keeping track of the beads so they weren't filched, showing fifteen different kinds of beads for a total sale of 67 cents, and answering questions like "How many beads does it take to go around my neck?"

Middle Earth has expanded into the former Greene's Cleaners space on South University, so it now occupies about 3800 square feet. The new section features gallery-quality handcrafts (largely pottery and soft sculpture) plus unusual imported textiles collected by Shevel on recent trips to Egypt and the Near East. These include magnificent Bedouin embroidered wedding dresses and saddle rugs, silk-embroidered tapestries from Uzbekistan in the Soviet Union (Russian Jews buy them before emigrating and take them to Israel to sell, since they can't take cash out of the country), and woven tapestries from the "children's village" of Harrania, in Egypt. An Egyptian architect and educator, Ramses Wissa-Wassef founded the school for nearby peasant children. They were taught to weave, then kept free from adult influences about style and art. The children developed quite original approaches and tended to incorporate natural subjects in their work. Most became good weavers; some, now in their thirties, have become great artists. (Baobab folk art gallery also has some Harrania children's tapestries.)

# M

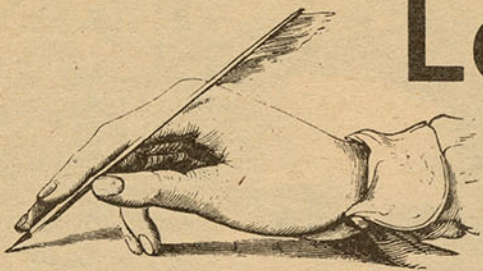
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# Letters

## Last Month's Cover

I usually can recognize the scenes in your cover drawings, but I've got to admit that last month's issue has me stumped. Where is the house with the cat in it?

—Jim Tehovnik

[Artist Doug Kassabaum tells us his "cat and plants in window" scene is a composite of archetypal Ann Arbor elements.]

## Save the Fur Sign

Last month you ran a story about the renovation current in progress at the Darling Block on Liberty St. I'm wondering what Concept IV intends to do with the wonderful art deco advertisement for Zwerdling Furs which is now on one of the walls of the alley. It would be tragic if "wall graphics" replaced this real piece of Ann Arbor history. The Zwerdling family has long been active in both the Jewish and University communities in Ann Arbor and this small reminder of more humble beginnings, as well as the artistic merit of the advertisement itself, should be preserved.

—Susan Wineberg



[Liberty Plaza designer Estelle Schneider says the sign will definitely be retained. The building will be painted a subtle concrete color around the sign. She is investigating the possibility of either sealing the sign with a clear sealer to protect it from the weather or giving it a gentle touch-up of paint to prevent it from gradually peeling away. Rather than repainting the sign so it looks new, she wants to "retain its ancient quality." Osias Zwerdling spoke with her about the sign several times before he died. He had it painted by an artist, he said, not an ordinary sign painter, shortly after the building was erected around 1915. He remained very proud of the sign.]

## Marijuana Article Feedback

I was so disappointed to see in the *Observer* (up until now my favorite Ann Arbor publication) that article on the marijuana dealer. Surely you can find more whole-

some topics than the career of a person who is blatantly breaking the laws of our city.

—Diane Snelling

Your article on the marijuana merchant was really nice! It's good to know that the competitive free-enterprise system is working in that sector of the economy, too.

—Bill Pavlick

Your marijuana dealer informant says dope wholesales for around \$350/lb. I happen to know (from years of experience) that you can get weed wholesale for \$250/lb. and less.

—One who knows

[Our informant tells us it's a question of the quality of the product. He personally prefers not to deal in cheaper marijuana.]

## Impresario Subscriptions

I found your article on the new *Impresario* magazine interesting. How can I get a subscription?

—Dee Summerfield

[Send \$8 to Buckheim & Rowland Publishing, Inc., 405 North Main, Ann Arbor 48104.]

## A Jim Loudon Fan

Finally someone has given credit to one of Ann Arbor's most brilliant lecturers, Jim Loudon. I hope the University appreciates what a great resource to the community he is.

—David Daniels

[Loudon begins a new series, "Above Ann Arbor," in this month's issue. You'll find it in the Leisure Notes section.]

## Jeff Mortimer: Pro and Con

Although I'm not a sports fan, I was fascinated by your interview with Jeff Mortimer. I always thought of sportswriters as a breed apart from other writers. That's clearly not true of Mortimer.

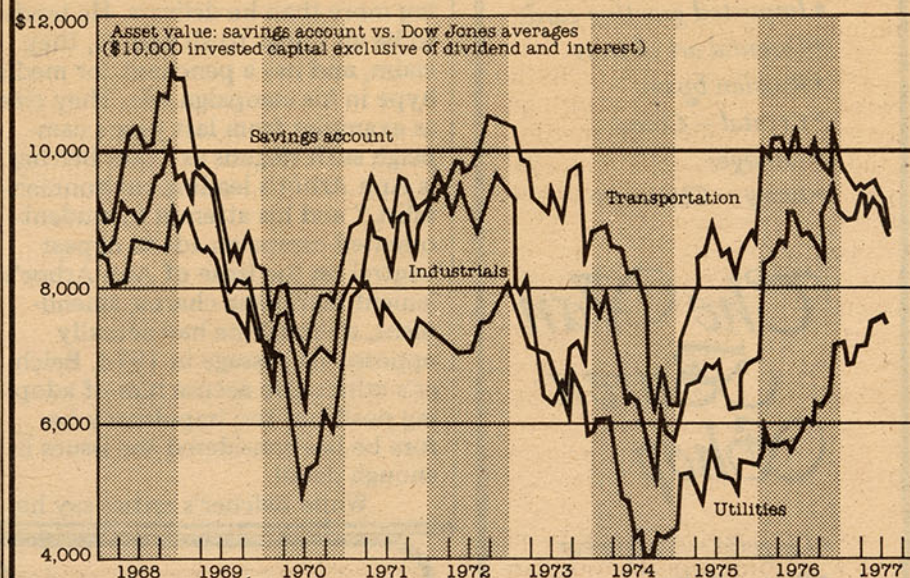
—Derek Anderson

How can Jeff Mortimer pretend to be an objective sportswriter when before the season has even started he has already predicted Michigan will end up in 4th place in the Big Ten?

—Bob McDonald

Letters to the *Observer* are welcome. Send them to: Ann Arbor Observer, 502 East Huron, Ann Arbor 48104.

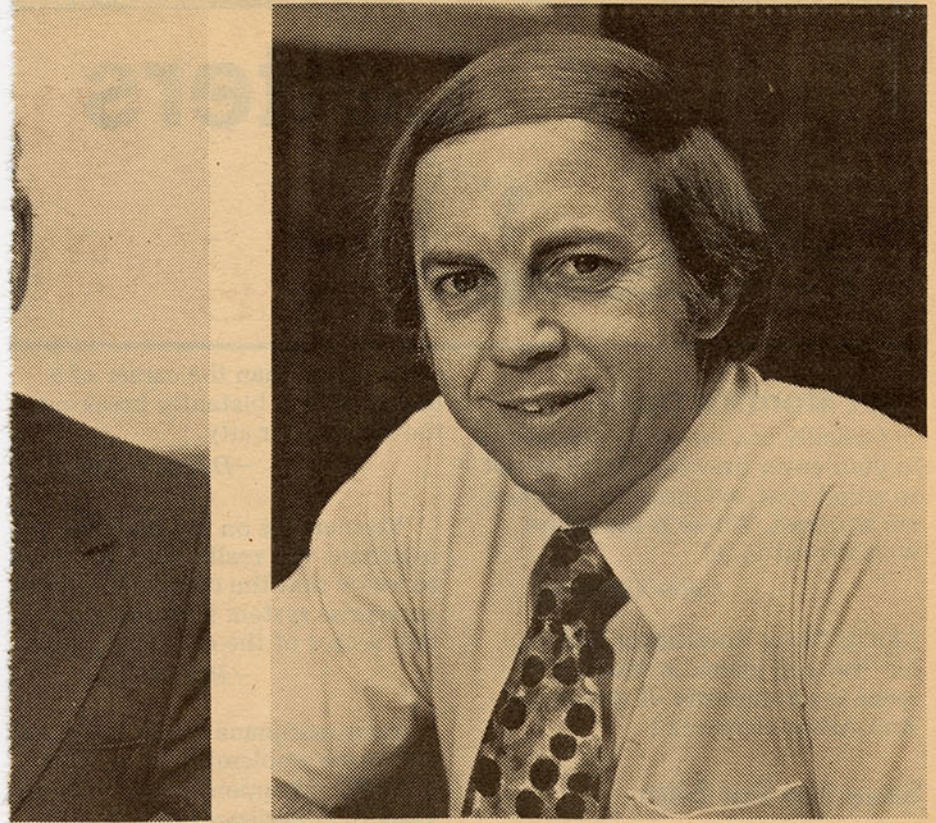
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# ral Rematch

*Belcher again challenges Wheeler for the mayor's seat.*

Ann Arborites will go to the polls this April 3rd to decide again whether they want Republican Lou Belcher or Democrat Al Wheeler to be mayor. Wheeler had apparently beaten Belcher by one vote last year, but a Republican appeal of the election and the discovery of inadvertent voting irregularities has resulted in a rematch. We talked to both admirers and critics of the two candidates and compiled these positive and negative portraits:

Belcher's critics accuse him of shooting from the hip and promising more than he delivers. He tends to be all things to all people, they claim, and has a penchant for media hype in his campaign ads. They cite as examples from last year's campaign such slogans as "Lou Belcher is Ann Arbor's leading environmentalist," and his attempt in student-oriented campaign ads to appear neutral on the issue of Ann Arbor's lenient marijuana charter amendment, although he had actually opposed its passage in 1974. Belcher's critics also accuse him of adopting positions too impulsively before he has considered the issues in enough detail.

While Belcher's critics say he

tends to oversimplify issues, Wheeler, it is said, goes to the opposite extreme. Hamlet-like in his agonized deliberations over city matters, Wheeler has been more of an obstacle than a leader for both Republicans and Democrats on council, according to his critics. With decades-old ties to the civil rights movement, he remains overly suspicious of the establishment city bureaucracy as well as business interests, they say. Critics charge he has not successfully made the transition from outside protestor to inside leader, and for that reason has difficulty representing equally the interests of all Ann Arbor citizens. Wheeler's critics also say he gets bogged down in considering minute details of city matters, and therefore can't effectively stay on top of ongoing issues.

While Wheeler's critics see him as too indecisive and negative, Belcher's supporters see decisiveness as one of Belcher's strong points. He pushes needed city projects with vigor, they say, and keeps a positive thrust in the positions he advocates. Belcher is also seen by admirers as readily approachable, open, and willing to compromise. He is said

to be in good touch with the will of the electorate.

Wheeler's admirers point to the integrity of the man and his sensitivity to the needs of Ann Arbor's less affluent citizens. For Wheeler, they point out, there is a less visible, less articulate segment of citizens whose interests ought to be weighed in deciding city matters. He studies the issues before city council in detail and doesn't take easy answers. His questioning of facts and figures supplied by the city bureaucracy, supporters claim, has improved the quality of the information given council.

It looks like another close election. Some think Wheeler will be helped by a backlash from the Republican legal tactics in trying to get last year's election overturned. Republican attempts to force the illegal township voters to reveal who they voted for mayor turned off a lot of people, it is suggested. Wheeler could also be helped by a larger turnout of students in this election, drawn by tenant proposals on this year's ballot and by active voter registration and campaigning of tenants' groups.

Belcher should be helped by his more activist position on repairing the city's roads, an increasingly important concern of Ann Arbor citizens. He will also have more money at his disposal (he outspent Wheeler almost two to one in last year's election). More money could provide a special advantage in a short campaign (six weeks rather than three months). Media advertising should play a bigger part in this election because there's less time for face-to-face campaigning.

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# Council Candidates Talk of Their Backgrounds and the Issues

**T**HE annual city council races are heating up again, with all the candidates set to do battle.

As usual, it is the mayor's contest and the 4th Ward race whose outcomes should decide whether Republicans or Democrats rule the city for the next year. It will also be

interesting to see how 1st Ward incumbent Wendell Allen will do against Democratic challenger Susan Greenberg.

Allen's upset of Democrat Ezra Rowry two years ago (the 1st Ward typically votes over 60% Democratic) was widely interpreted as the re-

sult more of Rowry's unpopularity than Allen's popularity. Just how popular Allen is will now be tested when he faces a stronger opponent. One city election buff we know thinks the odds are three to one in favor of Greenberg.

Assuming Allen loses, it will take Democratic victories for both ma-

yor and 4th Ward council person for Democrats to regain control of city hall. Both races are rated toss-ups.

We asked each of the council candidates to tell us a little about their backgrounds and what they see as the issues in this year's race. Here is what they had to say:

## FIRST WARD:

*Allen (R) vs. Greenberg (D)*

Wendell Allen, 30, staged an upset two years ago by winning a council seat in the normally Democratic 1st Ward. Born in Chattanooga, Tenn., Allen said this about his background: "My father was a laborer in a papermill. My mother was a maid. I'm the eighth child of ten kids. All of my brothers and sisters have gone to college. It's the typical black southern family that says to the children, 'If you don't do anything else, get a good education.'"

"Chattanooga is a southern industrial town. Southern segregated black society is far more stable than you find in northern cities. The church and schools and other institutions were run by blacks. What you get is a better person out of that because you have an opportunity to exercise leadership within your own institutions in the capacities that blacks just never did in other parts of the country.

"At Fisk University, I studied

physics because we were in the generation of kids who all wanted to be great scientists. When the black power civil rights movement came along, I was caught up in that and I changed my major to history."

After getting a B.A. in history, Allen went to law school at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland for a year, dropped out, and after several jobs is now coordinator of the Equal Opportunity Program at Hydramatic in Ypsilanti, where his job is to see that minorities and women are hired.

About the issues, Allen had this to say: "One of the most pressing things would be the citizens deciding for themselves the impact of University Hospital moving out of Ann Arbor. The circulation of traffic is a red herring that has been thrown into this thing, but the real issue is that if the university builds one building outside Ann Arbor, then every time a building becomes too old, then they're going to start a trend of going outside the city. It's important for Ann Arbor to have a city hospital, and I think that's a big issue.

"It's important for Ann Arbor to have a city hospital, and I think that's a big issue."

**-Wendell Allen**

"I think we made a good approach at council with the \$1.5 million being allocated specifically for roads. There is in some places a lot of fat in the budget. You're talking about a 219 page budget and right off the bat, to be specific, I don't know where it is. If it comes down to it, the airport and the golf fund can be cut. If people want good roads, they're going to have to make some sacrifices first on those luxury items. I've gone through three budgeteering processes with the city, and if the administrator has the priorities given to him, he can just tell his departments what they are. One of the things we have to be very careful in doing is cutting back basic city services. There has to be a balance between getting the \$1.5 million together on the one hand and at the same time preserving the basic city

services. One of the things to consider also is that when this work is started, very little up-front money is necessary, because of Ann Arbor's credit rating. We can get credit from banks and things like that."

Susan Greenberg, 38, was born in Columbus, Ohio, where her father was a chemist. Her family then moved to a farm in Augusta Township in 1946, and her father worked in the paint department of an auto company. In 1957 she came to Ann Arbor to attend Michigan. She received a B.A. in education, then worked for a while as a lab technician. She then lived for a time in Berkeley, California, then returned to Ann Arbor in 1965 to get married. She taught for a year in Pinckney, Michigan (commuting from Ann Arbor), and has since been raising a family (one son, one daughter).

Greenberg had this to say about the issues: "When there isn't a majority of one particular party on council, nothing gets done. I hope that Al Wheeler wins because when the majority party has the mayor,

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"I feel very strongly that citizens have to have an input into whatever is being decided for their community."

-Susan Greenberg

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"Of course they do have to fix the holes in the roads. And some of the roads have to be resurfaced. But I would rather see a quality job than just a patch-up job. Obviously we can't continue to provide all the services we have been providing without raising some money somewhere along the line. And I think the programs that have to be cut are those that really are serving the middle class of this community. If we are going to come up with this \$1.5 million, we might have to cut back on the recreation department, for instance. Or possibly reduce the leaf pickup and sweeping the streets."

Speaking of broader issues, Greenberg said, "I feel very strongly that citizens have to have input into whatever is being decided for this community in terms of building, and other issues. I believe in public hearings. I would like to see more public hearings at earlier stages of the planning rather than waiting until everything's completed, and then the public is told that 'on your corner there's going to be a new building.' Then the pressure is too great to stop it."

"The citizens of Ann Arbor deserve to hear at least once a year from city hall, not through the newspaper, but something that actually comes in the mail. I realize this costs money, but I think there should be a place in the budget for an informational packet."

#### SECOND WARD:

Earl Greene is unopposed.

#### THIRD WARD:

Mitchell (D) vs. Sheldon (R)

Clifford Sheldon, 35, was born in a suburb of Long Beach, New Jersey, where his father was in the personnel department of Western Electric. Sheldon went to Duke, and after receiving his B.A., came to the U-M to get a masters in business administration. He then entered a

"In the short term, the only answer is to change priorities."

-Cliff Sheldon

management program at Kroger, working at the Kroger on Broadway where he did, "everything from unloading trucks to slicing pork chops." He quit after a year, and since 1966 has worked at Ann Arbor Bank and Trust, where he is now a commercial loan officer, a job he finds enjoyable and interesting.

Here is what Sheldon had to say to us about the issues: "It's basic city services. Streets should be improved. Parking, snow removal, sewage, and the solid waste problem must be looked at on a permanent basis. On a long-term basis I feel we have to get additional support from state and federal government. We should also encourage new development in town; make it easier for clean businesses to locate here, I've talked to a lot of people who are considering starting businesses in town, and they find that some of the regulations and procedures they have to go through are difficult relative to other places. They end up going elsewhere. They have difficulties getting building permits, time delays, and trouble getting final approval. I'd like to see if these things

could be streamlined.

"In the short term, the only answer is to change priorities. People have a tendency to come up with simple solutions, and I don't see a lot of simple solutions. Maybe there are no easy answers. You talk to people on council, and they say there just isn't any extra money. I have some financial background, and I want to look into it further myself. I would be naive if I said we are going to find five million dollars and fix up all the streets. Ultimately, it's going to be a question of priorities. Maybe we're going to have to say something like, 'Is it going to be streets or parks?'"

Patrick Mitchell, 61, grew up in Ironwood, Michigan, where his father mined iron ore for almost

fifty years. After high school, Mitchell worked in lumbering and in CCC camps during the Depression. After four years in the army during World War II, he came to Ann Arbor in 1945 to go to Michigan, but his wife's illness forced him to go to work. He got a job with Michigan Bell as a cable splicer, work which he has been doing ever since.

"There's no free ride for any segment of society. Everybody's going to have to contribute to the best of their means."

-Pat Mitchell

About the issues, Mitchell told us this: "Of course, it's a foregone conclusion, everybody's in favor of de-

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cent roads. And we need a decent rapid transit system. Better sewers and a better water system. We also need to be concerned with the preservation of the city and the area around its perimeter. It would help to have better relations with surroundings communities." Such improvements will take a long-term approach, Mitchell asserts. "We've got to go to a sewer and water system that has some semblance of sanity to it for the protection of everybody here. You know a bubonic plague germ doesn't stop at the city limits.

"There's no free ride for any segment of society. Everybody's going to have to contribute to the best of their means. Inevitably we're going to have to have a tax increase of some kind. It could be a city income tax or a use tax. I don't know. You can't operate a government in 1978 on a tax structure based on costs of 1968.

"As a stopgap, we're going to have to reapportion the current resources of the city. The \$1.5 million dollars recently proposed for the roads is all right for a start. You're gonna have a howl from every department in the city that's going to make the banshees of Ireland sound like they're deaf mutes. Everybody's going to be clamoring, 'You can't do this to me.' You can figure it in Yiddish, Gaelic, or Roman numerals, but it has to be paid for. It's a question of not only biting the bullet, but we're going to have to make a meal of it."

#### FOURTH WARD:

Cappaert (D) vs. Fisher (R)

LeRoy Cappaert, 54, is an old hand at Ann Arbor politics. A three-time council member during the six-

"There has to be ongoing maintenance of our streets and a thorough repair of them."

-LeRoy Cappaert

ties from the old 5th Ward, he was also Mayor Wheeler's campaign manager for both of his mayoral races.

Cappaert was born in Silvis, Illinois, where both his parents worked in a foundry. After high school, he served an apprenticeship as a machinist. He was drafted by the army in 1943, then after the war returned to Silvis to work as a machinist. Cappaert says the life of an hourly worker didn't suit him. He liked to play pool until early in the morning with friends who were college students. The next day he would have to punch in at 7 A.M. while his friends could sleep until their 10 o'clock classes. "So I went to

college so I wouldn't have to work," he told us. That college was Augustana in nearby Rock Island. He got a degree in music and then taught band and orchestra in a public school near Silvis.

Desiring a more stimulating environment, Cappaert then decided to go to grad school in history at Wisconsin, where he got an M.A. He then returned to Silvis and spent three months in a seminary. He left there, and then read meters for a short time before he found a job teaching history in junior high school. After a couple of years of that, he again wished for a more cosmopolitan atmosphere, and got a job teaching school in Ann Arbor in 1953. He is now principal of Abbot School.

Here is what Cappaert had to say to us about the issues: "There has to be ongoing maintenance of our streets and a thorough repair of

them. We will have to divert some more money than is currently being done for maintenance and emergency repairs. Belcher throws out that he wants a million and a half a year to do this, but then you take a look at the city budget and ask, 'Where is the money coming from?' I would want to examine the budget that is now in the process of being made and then hear what people would be willing to cut. Beyond that, we're going to have to be candid with the electorate, we're going to have to say that there ought to

be an additional road millage. There must be public hearings, and the millage should name specific roads to be repaired, and the standards of these repairs should be determined in advance. We need good repairs. Bad repairs are like filling a tooth cavity with sand." Cappaert also mentioned the need for more mod-



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erate cost housing in Ann Arbor.

David Fisher is a hard guy to get an interview with. He refused to talk to *Michigan Daily* reporters when they sought him out for their annual election round-up. We don't know whether he would have turned us down, too, because we never got a hold of him. Following his defeat of fellow Republican Earl McIntire in the March primary, he went on vacation and wasn't back before our deadline.

We did get to talk with Fisher's campaign manager, former mayor Jim Stephenson, who filled us in on Fisher's background and his views on the issues.

Fisher, 32, was born in Dayton, Ohio. He came to Ann Arbor in the mid 60's to attend the University, where he received a B.S. in civil engineering and an M.B.A. in accounting. He is a licensed professional engineer and a C.P.A. After graduation, he worked for a large accounting firm in the Detroit area and presently is head of the auditing department of American Federal Savings in Southfield.

**"Fisher will be looking at the city budget with an eye toward redistributing funds so there will be more money for such costly projects as parking and road repairs."**

**—Jim Stephenson  
on David Fisher**

Stephenson described the issues as centering around the proper allocation and maximum use of city resources. He explained that Fisher sees the main function of city government as providing the basic services which citizens can't provide for themselves: Stephenson cited snow removal, street maintenance, police and fire, and sewer and water services as examples. Fisher intends to use his experience in fiscal matters to increase the amount of service per taxpayer dollar. With a C.P.A.'s expertise, he will be looking at the city budget with an eye toward redistributing funds so that there will be more money for such costly projects as parking and road repairs.

Stephenson told us, "I don't think there's going to be any new sources of income. To say that Fisher is going to promote the raising of more money someplace I think would be kidding the public. If you're going to allocate more money to basic services, you're going to have to take money away from something else." But Stephenson feels that good management should be able to ease the crunch in those areas where funds will be reduced. As examples of non-basic services he named: the planning department, the housing commission, and some of the activities in the Clerk's Office.

"It seems as though the winters have been getting more snowy around here," Stephenson told us. In view of this, one of Fisher's minor projects will be to have the Recreation Department sponsor more winter activities.

#### FIFTH WARD:

*Cmejrek (R) vs. Goldberg (D)*

James Cmejrek, 33, grew up in Fenton. His father was a superintendent for the Fisher Body plant in Grand Blanc; his mother was a housewife. After high school, he attended the University of Iowa, where he got a law degree. He then returned to Michigan to work in the Attorney General's office. In 1971 he came to Ann Arbor to start his present job with a four-man law firm. He is in the general practice of law, and does much of the firm's trial work.

**"It seems ridiculous that city council meets until 3 or 4 a.m. while I can lose my car in a pot hole on 7th Street."**

**—James Cmejrek**

He told us this about the issues: "The things that most people have talked about for a long time are the streets and the parking downtown. But everyone who knows anything about the city budget realizes that the money just isn't there. Citizens get excited when you talk about bond issues or millages because no one wants their property taxes to go up, so I think you have to look at some other areas. We should investigate the possibility of getting federal funds. Right now parking fines go to the general fund, which I think is ridiculous. The money from tickets should go back into the parking system. This is not a lot of money, but if we can get a little bit from here and a little bit from there, possibly funds can be derived to build a parking structure.

"It's an extremely complicated problem to set priorities within the city budget. Before you can make that judgment you have to know all of the facts, and I don't know that yet. But it's gotten to the point where it should be investigated fully, and something has got to be accomplished.

"One of the biggest issues is that many people are turned off by city government—by all forms of government really—because people

in government do a lot of talking and nothing ever seems to get done. It seems ridiculous that the city council meets until 3 or 4 a.m., while I can lose my car in a pot hole on 7th Street. That sounds simplistic, but that's what most people think about when they think about city government. That's the cause of the unbelievable voter apathy in this town."

Cmejrek also told us he is against the proposed change in city government from a weak mayor to a strong mayor system. He thinks the present system favors more citizen participation. Cmejrek supports the Old West Side Association because he believes it is good for property values and because it has wide support from those who live in the Old West Side District.

Joel Goldberg, 27, is faced with the task of pulling a major upset in the Republican 5th Ward. The only son of a New Haven, Conn., attorney, Goldberg majored in political science at Yale. "Politics have always fascinated me both from an academic and from a participatory viewpoint," he told us.

Goldberg came to Ann Arbor in 1974 to go to grad school in political science at Michigan. After a year of grad school, "I decided that the academic life and I were not quite temperamentally suited for one another." Goldberg found he liked the somewhat slower pace of life in the Midwest. He also finds the people more friendly than in the East. So after dropping out of academia, he got a job at Tice's Mens Shop, where he is now manager of their Maple Village branch.

Three years ago the Goldbergs moved into Pine Lake Village Cooperative, a mixed-income housing cooperative with 129 families. He is now president of the board of directors of the cooperative, and his growing awareness of housing problems led to his involvement in local politics.

About local issues, Goldberg told us this, "The number one, two and three issues that are on the people's mind are the conditions of the

**"Realistically there's only two ways that we're going to raise the money needed, and it's a very hard decision as to which of those two we pursue."**

**—Joel Goldberg**

streets. To the extent that it is feasible, I think the new council is going to have to take a very serious look at where the financing to improve our streets can come from. This proposal that Lou Belcher has come up with to rob the city budget of a million and a half dollars: first of all, it's only a drop in the bucket as far as the amount that's needed to really repair the streets adequately. Realistically there's only two ways that we're going to raise the money needed, and it's a very hard decision as to which one of those two we pursue. Number one way is to chop a lot of things that are dear to a lot of Ann Arbor citizens out of the budget. And I'm talking about several million. It would have to come out of parks and recreation, housing inspection, leaf pickup, police and fire budgets, and I'm not sure that that's the way to go. I think that people will find that although roads are very important to them, once that money is taken out of these other programs and they begin to dry up, people are going to start missing them. The other alternative is obviously a special millage or bond proposal. This would have the advantage of not curtailing other programs."

According to Goldberg, "Ann Arbor has a crying need for more low and moderate cost housing." He thinks such housing should be built on Packard-Beakes Land, and rents subsidized with federal money.

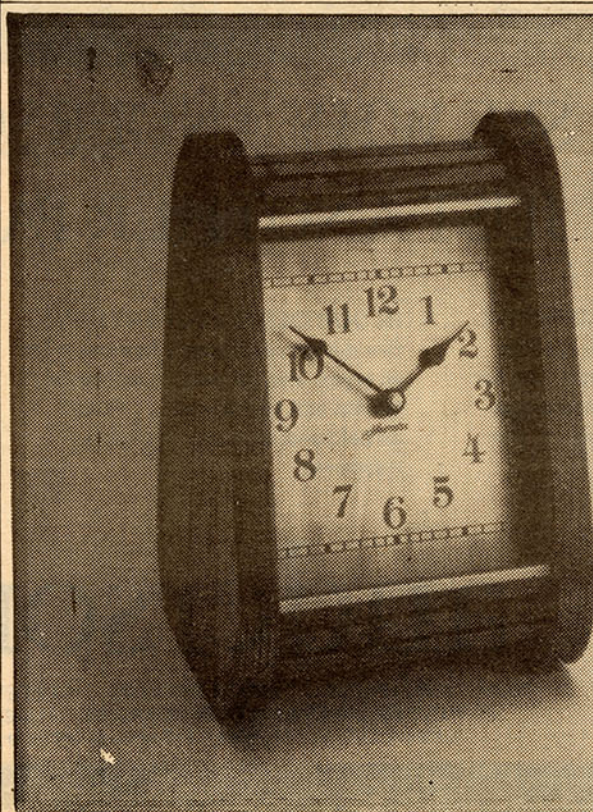
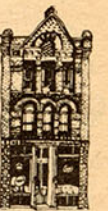
**—Peter Zetlin**

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# Jacobson's



# The Story Behind the Charter Amendment Proposals

After a two-year hiatus, landlord-tenant issues are back on the City's April election ballot, in the form of two proposed charter amendments. Though neither is expected to generate the excitement, or opposition, that prior rent control amendments produced, tenant enthusiasm could affect voter turnout, and possibly the outcome of the crucial races for Mayor and Fourth Ward City Councilmember.

The proposal which is receiving the most attention deals with provisions for a new Tenants' Rights Booklet, a subject of longstanding partisan feuding on City Council. The amendment would make the booklet a permanent fixture of the City Charter. The booklet would be divided into three parts: one-third written by tenant advocates; one-third by landlord advocates; and one-third by City representatives. The author-advocates would be appointed by the Mayor, based on certain qualifying characteristics.

The history of tenants' rights booklets goes back to 1969, when Democrats controlled City Council for the first time in forty years. They ordered the production of a booklet informing tenants of some of their rights under state and local laws. There was no organized distribution of the document, however, so few tenants ever saw it. In 1973, Democrats revived the idea, this time passing an ordinance requiring landlords to give a copy to each tenant.

One of the first acts of the new Republican majority in 1973 was to modify the content of the booklet. Under pressure from landlord constituents, the GOP Councilmembers made a number of changes to tone down the language. "Landlord" was considered a negative-sounding word, so "landlord/tenant" became "lessor

/lessee." Any mention of the Ann Arbor Tenants Union (AATU), despised by some landlords for its 1969 rent strike and other activities, was ordered stricken from the document. It was even renamed "Rights and Duties of Tenants."

Last summer, revised wording for the booklet was prepared by an aide to Democratic City Councilmembers. Again, the Republicans insisted upon modifying the language, striking some of the frequent suggestions to seek legal advice, etc.

GOP Councilmembers have consistently argued that the City approach must be "balanced," that the language they oppose tends to incite tenants against their landlords, rather than seeking reasonable solutions. They maintain that the majority of landlords are honest, conscientious people who are already hassled enough by bad tenants.

Democrats and the tenant groups argue that the City must act to end an existing imbalance which favors landlords. Landlords, they say, don't need any help from the City. They're experienced; they know all their rights; they have attorneys. Many landlords, it is charged, are unscrupulous businessmen, who take advantage of tenants' ignorance.

The Tenants Union finally tired of this partisan situations, which leaves the fate of the booklet in the hands of whichever party controls the Council. In less than four weeks, they gathered a surprising 6100 signatures to put a charter amendment on the ballot. If approved, it would mandate production and distribution of the booklet. As a part of the charter, the tenants' right booklet would be immune to Council actions. The charter has been criticised as ridiculously detailed for a charter proposal (it specifies what size and

color paper must be used, what size type, etc.), but the AATU wanted all bases covered in advance.

The second charter amendment would make it a crime to knowingly include an illegal or deceptive clause in any lease. It would also require that each lease inform tenants that some of the clauses it contains might be unenforceable. The AATU did a study of local leases and claims that 60% of them contain illegal or deceptive clauses. Prominent examples are clauses by which the tenant waives his/her right to a jury trial or agrees to pay the landlord's legal fees in any dispute. The AATU proposal is designed to inform tenants that they aren't bound by such provisions, even if they signed a lease containing them.

The Ann Arbor Democratic Party endorsed both proposals at its February platform meeting. The GOP is not expected to take a stand as a party, but individual candidates may make their views known. Mayoral candidate Lou Belcher describes the two proposals as "innocuous" and opposes both. He says the existing booklet is better than what is proposed, and the lease clause amendment "doesn't do anything."

—Tom Wieder

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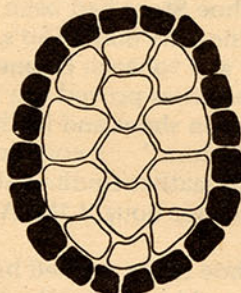
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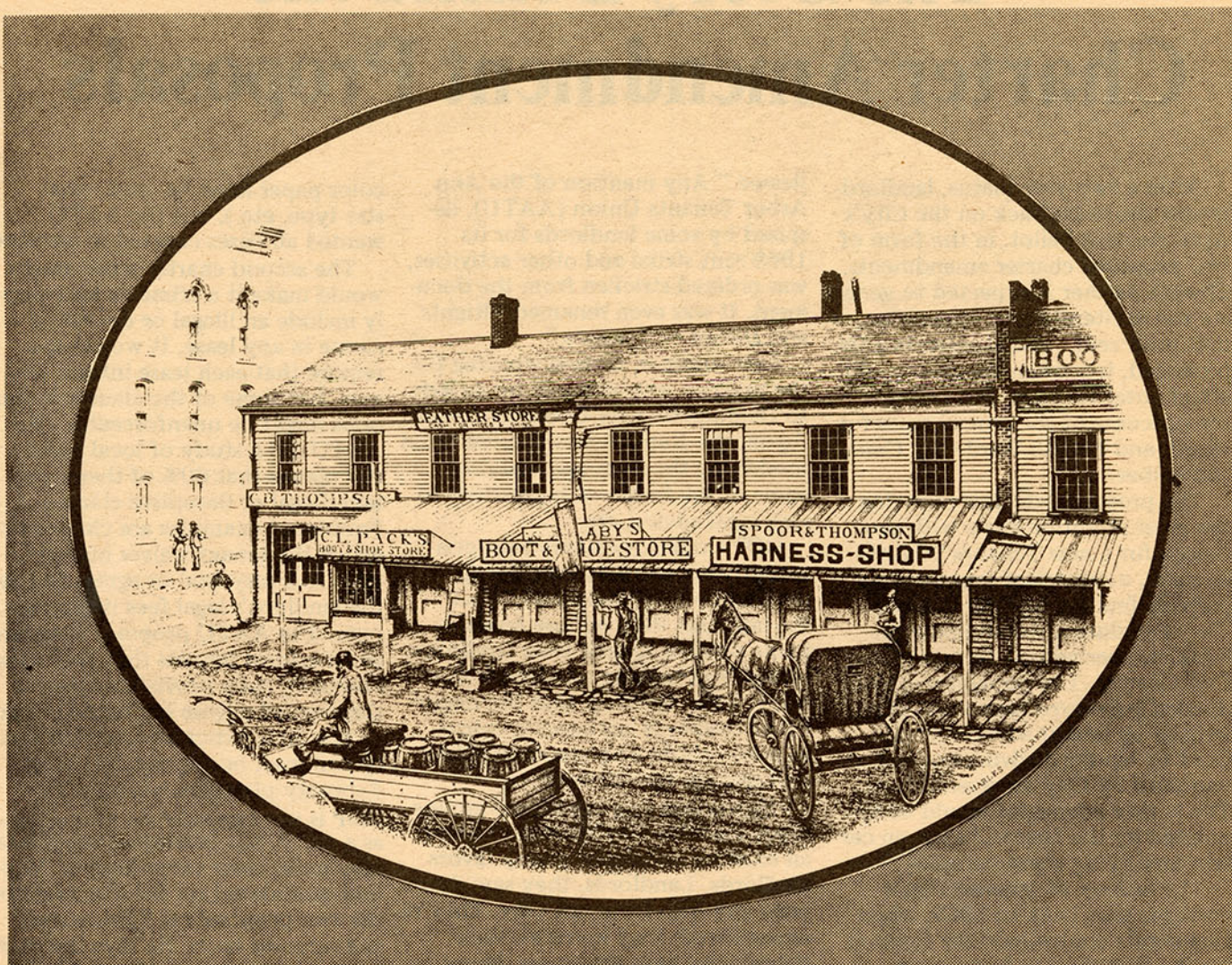


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## Then and Now: Main at Washington



**1862** Pen and ink drawing by Charles Ciccarelli.

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1880 Bird's-eye view

After log cabins, clapboard storefronts like this were Ann Arbor's first downtown commercial buildings. With their covered sidewalks and off-kilter windows, they gave the village the air of a Western town thrown up in a hurry — not a misleading impression in 1828, when the American Block pictured here was built on Main Street at the corner of Washington by Edward Clark. He ran a store in the building.

Artist Charles Ciccarelli spent 127 hours drawing this minutely-detailed version of an old photograph of the American Block. But doing the research to date it took even longer. Ciccarelli is a fanatic for detail in historical research as well as drawing; every print he sells is accompanied by an in-depth description of the scene.

Here's a synopsis of Ciccarelli's historical notes on the scene, beginning at the photo's left:

Hangsterfer's Hall, the three-story building to the far left, was Ann Arbor's finest commercial building when erected in 1860, according to then-contemporary sources. The ground floor was Jacob Hangsterfer's confectionery; the upper floors, with banquet rooms and space for dancing and musical and theatrical performances, was Ann Arbor's cultural center in the 1860's.

C. B. Thompson had just hung out his sign when this photo was taken. Previously Charles B. Thompson had been a partner with other shoe and dry goods merchants. His new store advertised "staple dry goods . . . cassimeres, flannels . . . also a fine assortment of boots and shoes, and yankee notions . . . a full stock of groceries . . . farmers produce bought & sold."

C. L. Pack's Boot & Shoe Store had been making and selling shoes at No. 2 American Block since the mid 1850's. After 1870 Clarkson L. Pack went into the cigar and tobacco business. Perhaps the competition in the shoe and leather business proved too fierce — so many of the businesses in these scenes deal in shoes and leather. The sign over Pack's advertises "cash for hides & skins" — a common source of cash income for farmers. This tannery and leather findings store was run by William McCreery, an Irishman who later bought the American Block for the value of the land it occupied.

W. Allaby's Boot & Shoe Store opened here in the late 1850's. William Allaby, born in England, sold ready-made shoes and made shoes to order as was the custom at the time.

Spoor & Thompson Harness Shop made and sold saddles, harnesses, trunks and so forth. At the time of this photo, Charles Spoor was mayor of Ann Arbor. John W. Thompson had already left the firm, though the partners' sign remained up.

In 1866 the American Block was torn down for the four buildings that still stand on the site today. William McCreery, the tanner, had retired from leatherworking in 1865, due to ill health, but with the money he had saved he bought the American Block, demolished it, probably sold three lots and then built the First National Bank Building on the fourth. He was a director of the bank.

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## C. 1867

Supplanting the clapboard buildings in the Ciccarelli drawing were these far more substantial structures. This photo was probably taken in the summer of 1867, shortly after these buildings were completed. The Victorian brick buildings were products of Civil War-era affluence — quite a contrast in scale with the small frame buildings down Washington Street to the left, the products of an earlier era, probably the 1830's. In a few years the white house to the far left would be replaced by the building where the Del-Rio Bar is today. Feiner & Brodbeck were boot and shoemakers in the white frame building behind Bach's store. Feiners later went into the glass business. Anton Teufel next door was a harness maker on Washington Street for many years.

There are lots of signs on the foreground brick buildings, indicating a variety of offices upstairs over the stores. Above Philip Bach's dry goods store (where a corner sign advertises "Cash paid for wool") were a dentist and a business college. Next door, above the G. A. Gilbert Co., were a lawyer and the agent of the Phoenix Insurance Company of Hartford.

Above Wines & Worden's store for dry goods, groceries and carpets was the Y.M.C.A. free reading room.

Showpiece of the block was the First National Bank building. Faced in smooth stone, with pointed Gothic upper windows that had elaborate tracery, capped by a magnificent pinnacled cornice to carry out the Gothic

motif, this building was impressive in every detail. The pointed windows, now filled in, can still be made out today, and the stone detail below the cornice remains.

Several street improvements are evident in this photo: ample hitching posts, cobblestone gutters, better graded streets, and gas street lamps. The streets would not be paved until 1898.



**1978** The four buildings still stand today, without cornices but in good repair — the homes of two venerable Ann Arbor businesses: Muehlig's and Goodyear's.



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# Property Taxes (continued)

Almost 50% of the city budget goes to salaries, and more than any other factor, salary increases over the past decade are responsible for the giant leaps in the city budget. City employees didn't unionize until the late 1960's. A comparison of average Ann Arbor city unionized employee salaries in 1965 and 1977 shows what a difference a union can make:

	1965	1977
National average	\$ 4,945	\$ 9,594
Janitor	\$ 4,597	\$12,064
Patrolman	\$ 6,214	\$19,928
Firefighter	\$ 6,128	\$18,424
Refuse collector	\$ 5,108	\$13,157

Actually, these figures somewhat underestimate how much city salaries have gone up in twelve years, because they do not include fringe benefits, which today average 27-30% of city salaries. Back in 1965, that percentage was considerably lower.

Inflation in salaries and materials has, of course his most American cities in the past decade. But the common perception of Ann Arborites is that they pay significantly higher property taxes than other communities. We did some fairly extensive research in comparing the property tax burden on Ann Arbor citizens with those of other cities — not as easy a comparison to make as you might think.

Our findings, in a nutshell, bear out the prevalent idea that property taxes are high in Ann Arbor. Not only do Ann Arbor taxpayers pay a higher millage than all other Michigan communities over 50,000 in population (see table on page 19), but a more detailed analysis shows that Ann Arbor collects more property taxes per capita than any other community except Dearborn and Southfield. When industrial property taxes are subtracted from this total, only Southfield, which has a more substantial commercial tax base than Ann Arbor, is higher than Ann Arbor in per capita property taxes paid by homeowners, landlords, and businesses.

Why are Ann Arbor taxes so high? The most common reason given by our survey respondents was that the city government spends too much. Several people mentioned

that city employees were overpaid. We checked out this factor by comparing Ann Arbor employee wages with those of 48 other Michigan municipalities, using data compiled by the Michigan Municipal League. That data refutes the charge. Whether it be a firefighter, attorney, or common laborer, Ann Arbor city employee salaries are not much above average.

Looking more generally at the cost of running Ann Arbor's city government compared with other Michigan cities, the data again shows that Ann Arbor is not out of line. Dividing the total budget of six nearby cities by each city's population reveals the cost per capita of running each city:

1. Lansing	\$271 per citizen
2. East Lansing	\$226 per citizen
3. Ypsilanti	\$222 per citizen
4. Ann Arbor	\$206 per citizen
5. Kalamazoo	\$198 per citizen
6. Royal Oak	\$197 per citizen

Thus it isn't the Ann Arbor city government which is primarily responsible for Ann Arbor's high property taxes. Looking at how property taxes in Ann Arbor have increased in the past decade is a better indicator of what factors have boosted taxes:

	1968	1977
CITY	14.40 mills	16.50 mills
SCHOOLS	33.60 mills	42.58 mills
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	1.70 mills	2.80 mills
COUNTY	5.80 mills	7.05 mills
A.A.T.A.	—	2.50 mills

Note: a mill equals one dollar property tax per \$1,000 of assessed property.

There are two areas in particular in which Ann Arborites could be accused of extravagance: their transportation system and their schools. Back in 1973 Ann Arbor voters approved a 2.5 mill increase to pay for a new public transportation system (A.A.T.A.), and in doing so provided proportionately more funding for public transportation than virtually any other community in

the country. From one perspective, especially given the present mood of property taxpayers, this may seem like an act of wanton extravagance. But that 2.5 mills, which costs an average Ann Arbor household about \$50-\$60 a year, has reaped extraordinary dividends in state and federal matching grants. Only 40% of AATA's operating expenses must come from local taxes. The combined local, state, and federal monies have provided the first good test of how well an adequately funded public transportation can work in a community the size of Ann Arbor.

And AATA, after all, only accounts for 2.5 of a 71.05 total millage. Most (60%) of the property tax goes to Ann Arbor's public school system, one of the very most expensive school systems in the state. The latest available figures from Michigan's Department of Education (for 1975-76) show that of the 530 largest school districts in the state, Ann Arbor's ranks *fourth* in total instructional costs per student. By comparison, Ann Arbor's total property wealth is only 44th in the state, as measured in total city property value per student.

The cost of Ann Arbor's school system is high for several reasons.

For the past six years Ann Arbor has been designated an "affluent area" by the state, and for that reason is not eligible for \$3-4 million in state public school funds which go to most school systems the size of Ann Arbor's. Furthermore, Ann Arbor teachers have a higher salary than teachers in most other school districts — an average of \$17,980 plus benefits per teacher for the nine-month school year. Ann Arbor's school system is also costly because of the diversity of its educational program. Special curricula are available for students with many interests and career goals.

Keep in mind, of course, that the expensive school system Ann Arbor taxpayers support has not been foisted on them by irresponsible school administrators. Every dollar of the hefty school millage Ann Arborites pay was approved by a majority of citizens at the polls. Thus, while Ann Arbor citizens may complain bitterly about their bumpy roads and their high taxes, they have nothing to blame but the will of the electorate. It is the voters who have consistently turned down millage proposals to improve the city's roads, and it is the voters who have established the funding level of its school system.

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# Ann Arbor Taxes Compared

CITY (population)	Property Tax Rate (Rank)	Taxable Property Per Citizen (Rank)	Property Taxes Per Citizen (Rank)	Non-indus. Prop. Taxes Per Citizen (Rank)	Per Cent of Tax by Homeowners
ANN ARBOR (86,262) *	71.05	\$ 7,780 (4)	\$553 ( 3)	\$503 (2)	45%
WESTLAND (92,689)	69.36 (2)	\$ 4,148 (13)	\$288 (11)	\$279 (10)	62%
ROYAL OAK (79,191)	68.59 (3)	\$ 5,252 (9)	\$365 (8)	\$337 (3)	65%
TAYLOR (76,626)	68.53 (4)	\$ 5,306 (8)	\$364 (9)	\$313 (5)	53%
KALAMAZOO (71,442) *	67.46 (5)	\$ 5,577 (7)	\$376 (7)	\$293 (8)	42%
LIVONIA (114,881)	64.87 (6)	\$ 7,739 (5)	\$502 (4)	\$331 (4)	48%
ST. CLAIR SHORES (85,934)	64.69 (7)	\$ 4,986 (10)	\$333 (10)	\$311 (6)	79%
DEARBORN (98,986)	60.44 (8)	\$10,930 (1)	\$661 (1)	\$310 (7)	22%
DEARBORN HEIGHTS (79,239)	60.20 (9)	\$ 4,548 (12)	\$274 (13)	\$265 (11)	78%
SOUTHFIELD (75,978)	58.98 (10)	\$10,642 (2)	\$628 (2)	\$598 (1)	39%
ROSEVILLE (58,141)	58.11 (11)	\$ 4,831 (11)	\$281 (12)	\$237 (12)	65%
WARREN (172,755)	56.84 (12)	\$ 7,722 (6)	\$439 (6)	\$186 (13)	43%
STERLING HEIGHTS (86,932)	55.28 (13)	\$ 8,424 (3)	\$466 (5)	\$292 (9)	52%

\*Includes only college students living off-campus

This table should give a pretty good basis for comparing the tax burden on Ann Arbor citizens with the citizens of other cities. Here is how to interpret the various categories.

**Property Tax Rate:** This is the figure that most directly affects the tax payer — the amount per thousand dollars of assessed property which must be paid in property taxes. (Real estate is assessed at one half its market value.) A person who owns a \$50,000 house in Ann Arbor, for example, would have paid \$1,776.25 in property taxes last year (\$25,000 in assessed valuation times 71.05 mills).

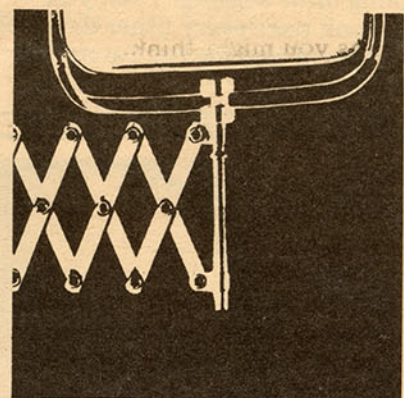
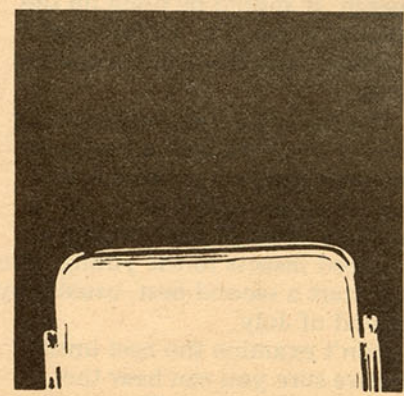
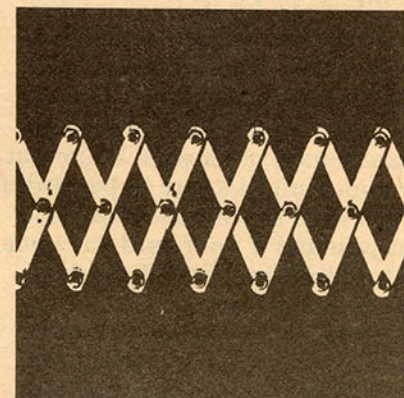
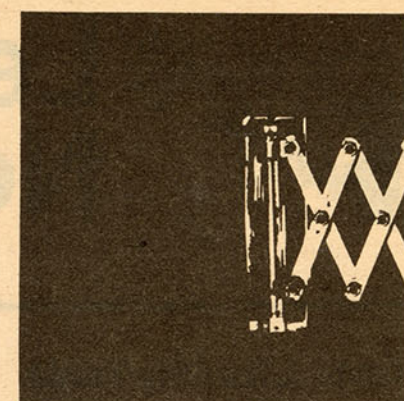
As can be seen, Ann Arbor citizens pay a higher millage than any other city listed. (All Michigan cities over 50,000 population without an income tax are included.) But comparing millages alone cannot tell you which cities must pay the most per capita in property tax. Hence the need for our next category.

**Taxable Property Per Citizen.** This is a measure of the affluence of a city based on the total amount of taxable property divided by the city's population. One can see from this column that Ann Arbor is property-wise a comparatively rich community, especially when its low industrial base is considered. Dearborn tops the list simply because of its high concentration of Ford plants and facilities.

Other things equal, the greater a community's total amount of taxable property per citizen, the lower its millage need be to pay for city services and schools. Ann Arbor's millage rate is especially high, given the ample size of its tax base.

**Property Taxes Per Citizen.** This is the total amount of property taxes paid by homeowners and businesses in a city, divided by the population of the city. This measure allows you to compare the financial burden on each city's taxpayers. Again, Ann Arbor is high when ranked with other Michigan cities. Its high millage and high property wealth combine to create a much greater tax for Ann Arbor property owners than for taxpayers in most Michigan cities.

**Non-industrial Property Taxes Per Citizen.** When you subtract the property taxes paid by the industrial sector of each city, the burden on the rest of the Dearborn taxpayers is shown to be relatively modest. Ann Arbor and Southfield, on the other hand, stand far above the field in amount of taxes paid by their citizens and commercial taxpayers. When you consider that Southfield has a substantially greater commercial tax base than Ann Arbor, it is clear that Ann Arbor homeowners pay quite high property taxes compared to residents of most other Michigan cities.



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# Leisure Notes

## Wrens Like City Yards

"Big noise for its size" is what the Chippewa Indians called the House Wren. If you want to hear these native American birds sing and watch them raise their young this summer, put a wren house out by mid-April. It's sure to be used if wrens were in your neighborhood last year and if your yard has some mature trees and lots of shrubby undergrowth nearby.

A wren house has an entrance hole 1" to 1 1/8" in diameter, and a 4" square base. It does not have a perch. It should be hung on the trunk of a tree 5 to 15 feet high and face away from the prevailing winds.

The bubbling song and bustling activity of wrens lasts all summer. The male house wren builds the nest. His mate lays 6 or 7 eggs in the third week of May. Both parents feed insects to the young. Then they start a second nest, usually by the end of July.

Don't examine the nest until you are sure you can hear the young birds begging. Then you can look once every other day without fear of making the parents desert their nest.

Putting out wren houses was very popular in the 1920's, but became less attractive when the wrens were seen being aggressive to other hole-nesting birds.



House wren, *Troglodytes aedon* (Length 5 in.)

Wrens are very territorial. They will chase away other wrens that come closer than about 150 feet from their nests. Wrens will try to take away holes made by woodpeckers and inhabited by bluebirds and chickadees. Unless the other birds are protecting eggs or their young, the wrens will win out.

So if you are lucky enough to have bluebirds, downy woodpeckers, or chickadees nesting in your yard, better not encourage the pushy little wren. Most Ann Arbor back yards, however, aren't secluded enough nowadays to attract the gentler hole-nesting birds to nest. Wrens, however, are easy to attract and fun to watch.

—Steven Cohen

## Competition Frisbee At the "U"

Gradually Frisbee players on this continent have been banding together to compete, and several times a year their local clubs come together in an International Frisbee Tournament, with support services provided by the Wham-O people, who sell Frisbees. The season kickoff is played here in Ann Arbor, sponsored by the official U. of M. Frisbee Club and its illustrious sub-group, the Humbly Magnificent Champions of the Universe, familiarly known as the Humblies.

This year the Fifth Annual U. of M. Frisbee Festival is held on the weekend of April 1 and 2 in the Central Campus Recreational Building on South Forest. Visitors are welcome to attend at no charge. They can see in action 250 contestants from the continent's Frisbee centers.

The game of guts developed in the Upper Peninsula at beer-busts, where it was traditional to play with beer in hand. In guts, two teams of five people each line up 15 yards apart and try to throw the plastic disc at the opponents so fast and hard they can't catch it. Quick reactions and tough hands are required, for the strongest throwers can fling the Frisbee from 80 to 100 m.p.h.

Guts, distance throwing and freestyle are the main competitive Frisbee events. Freestyle involves tricks and tends to appeal more to the not-so-competitive but light-hearted former hippies and students who got



Frisbee freestylist Barb Armstrong.

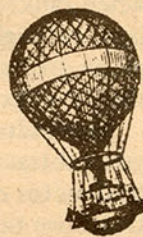
started playing Frisbee on the Diag on warm spring days. They soon found the disc to be a lively, versatile object that can curve, turn, roll and skip in many different ways.

Visitors at this April's Frisbee Festival will have a chance to pick up tips on improving throwing skills at the two throwing clinics, April 1 from 3 to 5 and April 2 from 1 to 2:30. The finals are held Sunday, with distance events from 12:30 to 1, guts from 2:30 to 4:00, and freestyle from 4 to 5. For more information about the Frisbee Festival and the U. of M. Frisbee Club (which is also open to non-students), call John Sappington at 973-2078, evenings.

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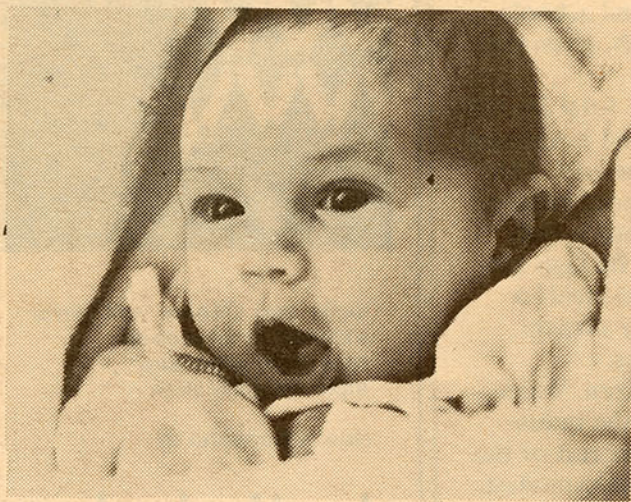


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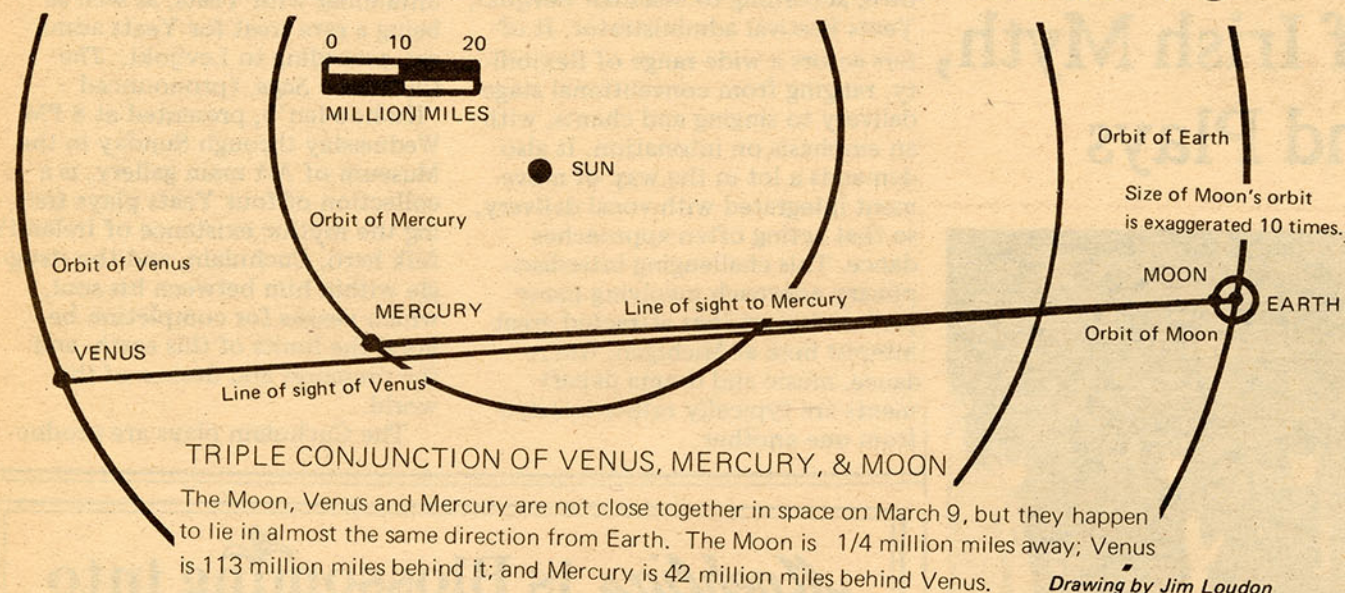
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# Above Ann Arbor: March 1978



Two rarely visible celestial phenomena highlight this month's celestial-events calendar: the usually difficult planet Mercury and a "young Moon" involved in a spectacular triple conjunction. All five of the planets visible to the unaided eye can be seen at the same time any early evening after the first week of the month; the next time all five appear together is not until mid-1980.

**Thu. 9 6:45 p.m.** (in Ann Arbor; elsewhere, exactly 20 minutes after local Sunset time, given in most newspapers.) You have a chance to see with binoculars a spectacular conjunction (close grouping of astronomical objects in the sky): Venus, Mercury, and a very young Moon. "Young Moon" means soon after the moment of New Moon, when the Moon, in its monthly orbit of the Earth, passes between us and the Sun and is therefore invisible, since its shadowed side is toward Earth. Seeing the Moon within 24 hours after New (which this month is 9:36 p.m. Wed. the 8th) is a rare and remarkable experience: the crescent is unbelievably slender, almost like a hair, and does not extend for a full 180 degrees semicircle. Mercury is also a rare sight (see below), while Venus completes the spectacle with its brilliance. Photographers (especially those with telephoto lenses) have a chance to get magnificent pictures of this event, combining the celestial objects with

## INTRODUCING "ABOVE ANN ARBOR"

This is the first in a series of monthly columns on astronomy, emphasizing things Ann Arbor residents can see for themselves with the unaided eye or binoculars, conducted by Jim Loudon. Loudon, profiled in last month's *Observer*, is an Ann Arbor professional lecturer on astronomy/space subjects; he's Staff Astronomer for U-M's Exhibit Museum Planetarium, director of the U-M Astronomical Film Festival.

well-chosen horizon features, selected beforehand by checking out different vantage points. Exposures will be short enough this soon after Sunset that they won't need to mount their cameras on clock-driven telescopes.

The time is crucial. Any earlier and the post-Sunset twilight will drown out the spectacle; any later and the three bodies will have set. Twenty minutes after Sunset, the conjunction will be 6 degrees above the point on the horizon that is 5 degrees south of due west. To estimate 6 degrees height, note that your clenched fist, held at arm's length, covers 10 degrees of sky from top to bottom. To find which way is west, note that many Michigan roads and streets run due east-

west or north-south. (See a reliable map). Select a vantage point ahead of time to make sure no buildings or trees block the west horizon; good possibilities include house-tops, fire towers, bridges, and parking structures.

**Fri. 10 through end of March, early evening.** Best chance this year to see Mercury — a planet that is brighter than the brightest star, yet most professional astronomers have never seen it. Reason: it's so close to the Sun that post-Sunset or pre-Sunrise glare usually drowns it out, and even when it's theoretically visible, it's usually so hard to find that without some brighter celestial object to guide you, it's almost impossible. This month you have such a guide. Venus, the brightest object in the sky other than the Sun and Moon, will be within 5 degrees of Mercury (see previous entry for how to estimate 5 degrees) all through this period.

On Fri. 10, 35 minutes after Sunset (7:11 p.m. in Ann Arbor), the Moon will be directly above Venus by a distance of 12 degrees, and Mercury will be about 1 degree (two Moon diameters) to the right of Venus. The time is important — much later and the two planets will have set — and it's important to have a vantage point with nothing blocking the west horizon. Binoculars will help. By the week of March 19-25, though, Mercury should be easily visible to the unaided eye as an orange starlike object about 5 degrees directly above Venus 45 minutes after Sunset (about 7:35 p.m. for Ann Arbor) low in the west. Venus itself will be brighter and white to yellow; nothing else low in the west is anything as bright as either of them.

**Mon. 20 6:34 p.m.** Vernal equinox: Spring begins. This means that today the length of day and night are equal and the Sun rises due east and sets due west. Days will get longer until the summer solstice on June 21, and as the daylight hours increase, temperatures in the northern hemisphere will climb. Many cultures and religions celebrate the equinox as the rebirth of nature, associated with planting rituals. In ancient Rome the death and resurrection of Attis, god of vegetation, was celebrated on March 22 to 27.

**Sun. 26** Easter, an astronomically determined event: it's the first Sunday after the first full Moon on or after the Vernal Equinox. As listed above, the Vernal Equinox is March 20 and the Full Moon is March 24.

—Jim Loudon •

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# The Yeats Theater Festival: A Rare Blend of Irish Myth, Poetry, Pubs and Plays

St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated magnificently in Ann Arbor this year with the Yeats Theater Festival from March 15 through 19. For this unusual multi-disciplinary event performers and scholars from many fields will present plays, poems, music, dance and symposia related to the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1856-1939).

Seventy-five years ago Yeats' original ideas about drama and Irish theater had great impact in revolutionizing Irish literature; today a U-M group studying the production of Yeats' plays is finding his approach an exciting stimulus in contemporary theater and one that's attracting more and more attention.

In 1889, when Yeats met Lady Augusta Gregory, they discovered a shared conviction that Ireland should have a serious Irish theater. Yeats was already an established poet much interested in mysticism, in Irish and Celtic mythology, and in creating an Irish literature based on ancient Irish folk sources rather than recent English influences. He and Lady Gregory decided to present in the spring of each year Irish and Celtic plays in a fresh, simplified manner, without elaborate costumes, sets or conventions that would distract attention away from the poetry of the dramatic language itself.

The results of Yeats' and Lady Gregory's efforts eventually became the Irish National Theater, better known as the Abbey Theater, in Dublin. Yeats and Lady Gregory had



From "The Cuchulain Saga"

hoped that the poetry of the new Irish dramas would tap into the passion for oratory already strong among the Irish. "We will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment," they said, "but the home of ancient idealism." In this hope they were over-optimistic — Irish capacity for sentimentality remained practically unbounded — but the Abbey Theater continues today as a focus of the serious national literature they helped to renew.

Yeats' idea of the theater also appeals to contemporary people

who aren't Irish at all. As a mode of theatrical presentation, Yeatsian drama is just now coming into its own, according to Marshall Levijoki, Yeats Festival administrator. It offers actors a wide range of flexibility, ranging from conventional stage delivery to singing and chants, with an emphasis on intonation. It also demands a lot in the way of movement integrated with vocal delivery, so that acting often approaches dance. This challenging interdisciplinary approach involving many performing arts has attracted great interest here at Michigan, where dance, music and drama departments are typically rather isolated from one another.

The dramatic offerings at the Yeats Festival this month would make a fine introduction to those unfamiliar with Yeats, as well as being a rare treat for Yeats admirers, according to Levijoki. *The Cuchulain Saga*, (pronounced "Ku-hoo-len"), presented at 8 PM Wednesday through Sunday in the Museum of Art main gallery, is a collection of four Yeats plays tracing the mythic existence of Ireland's folk hero, Cuchulain, and the struggle within him between his soul, which yearns for completion beyond the limits of this earth, and the pressures and desires of this world.

The Cuchulain plays are produc-

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ed by the U-M Yeats Ensemble, directed by Irene Connors. This group has intensively studied the staging of Yeats' plays. It got its start two years ago when members of Connors' drama class in voice and movement became so interested in Yeats that they formed a continuing ensemble. Performances of one play in the Cuchulain Saga were so enthusiastically received at a theater festival that the ensemble decided to produce other plays at this Yeats Theater Festival at Michigan.

The Festival's other major dramatic production, presented Friday and Saturday, March 17 and 18, at 8 PM in the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater, is in two parts. "Words for Music, Perhaps" consists of dramatic performances of Yeats' poetry, and Vaughn Williams opera *Riders to the Sea* is based on J. M. Synge's play of the same name.

In "Words for Music, Perhaps" Yeats' poems are performed three different ways, each successively more dramatic. First, Irene Connors recites poems in contrapoint to Jerry De Puit's percussive piano; then Vera Embree introduces the element of dance to the spoken poems and musical accompaniment; and finally, in Beatrice Manley's dramatic rendition of the "Crazy Jane" monolog-poems, many elements — words, sounds, movements and music combine to express the narrator's character.

The next step, of course, is drama, where several characters interact, as in *Riders to the Sea*. Actually, this production of Synge's 1903 play set to Vaughn Williams' music in 1928 goes beyond drama. It's opera in the manner of Wagner's total theater — what he called a "Gesamtkunstwerk" — in which language and myth rooted in a national folk culture combine with music, gesture, and visual design to form a theatrical unity of extraordinary power. According to Mary La Pettit, associate director of the Yeats Ensemble, Synge realized more than any other playwright at the Abbey Theater Yeats' ideal of poetic drama as coming from contact with the soil and with folk culture. Synge, upon Yeats' advice, left Paris to live with the Celtic peasants of the isolated Aran Islands west of Scotland. He drew on their language, beliefs, superstitions and tales in *Riders to the Sea*.

After Thursday and Friday evening's performances, starting at 10:30 the audience can retire to the University Club in the Michigan Union, which, it is hoped, will resemble an Irish pub like those Yeats frequented in Dublin. Poet Donald Hall (well known in Ann Arbor for his popular poetry readings when he taught here) returns to recite Yeats poems in this informal atmos-

phere. (He's also participating in several symposia.) These "Evenings at the Pub" will also feature Irish folk music played on ancient Irish instruments from the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments.

The U-M Museum of Art will exhibit illustrated broadsides and broadsheets of Irish poems and ballads. Many of the hand-colored reproductions of pen-and-ink drawings are by Jack Yeats, William Butler Yeats' brother and an important 20th-century Irish artist.

For a complete schedule of Yeats Theater Festival events, including the daytime symposia, contact The Yeats Theater Festival, 3524 Student Activities Building, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 48109. Tickets may be obtained at the same address. Prices: for *The Cuchulain Saga*, \$4.50 (\$3.50 to students); for *Riders to the Sea*, \$4.50 main floor, \$3.50 balcony. "Evening at the Pub" is free except for drinks.

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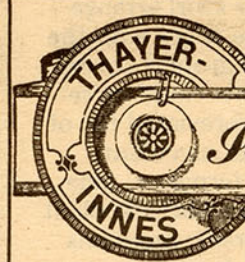
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## Pleasures of Landscaping on a Small Scale

The pleasure of planning and arranging a personal landscape of your own can be yours right now, despite the dreary winter and no matter how small the size of your own actual turf. When you design a dish garden of succulent desert plants, you can rearrange your plant materials at will without having to lift anything heavier than a spoon. When the weather's nice, you can take your portable landscape outside onto a balcony or terrace.

Richard Tuttle of Saguaro Plants has been making various dish gardens commercially for four years. His larger-scale dish garden variations may be seen in the windows of Turtle Island restaurant on State Street and at the Central Cafe on Main. Here is how he goes about constructing his miniature gardens:

First, for a permanent dish garden you need a dish at least 3 inches deep to allow roots to establish themselves. Most standard flower-pot saucers aren't deep enough. Tuttle sells a heavy 10" wide Mexican clay dish for \$3, \$4 if glazed. Bird baths can make spectacular giant-sized dish gardens, too. If the garden will be exposed outdoors to rain, the dish needs holes in the bottom. They can be drilled with a masonry bit if not already there.

You'll need at least three plants for the garden. You might be able to incorporate some lonely-looking small plants you already have. Any succulents and cacti work well together except for stone plants, which need different conditions (more light and less water). A variety of colors and plant shapes works best. For instance, a tall tree-shaped succulent looks good placed slightly off-center in the dish with other medium and short plants grouped around it in a loose swirl arrangement, ending at the edges with the shortest plants and ground covers.

Inexpensive plants could be selected from this abbreviated list of commonly-available succulents:

**Tree-shaped centerpieces:** jade plant (the miniature-leaf jade plant looks most like a tree); aeoniums (a relative to the jade plant); eu-



Materials for this dish garden, including the 10" clay dish at \$3, cost about \$15. Smaller gardens using five plants in the \$.70-\$1.90 range, can be made for as little as \$3.50. Rummage and yard sales are fine places to find interesting bowls for gardens.

phorbia (tall plants with many spindly arms).

**Low-growing globular plants:** various common cacti; echeverria (rosette-shaped succulents with mounded profiles).

**Ground cover:** low-growing members of the sedum species.

More unusual and costly plants can also be used, of course.

The soil comes next. Tuttle's recipe for cactus soil is 1/3 drainage material (coarse sand, gravel, or Perlite.) A handful of coarse drainage material — gravel or broken pottery — lines the dish. Next comes the soil. Then you plant the tall centerpiece plant, arrange the major rocks on the soil surface, plant the other plants, and finally strew small-

er stones and gravel over the soil to cover it. Attractive rocks and stones, brought home from a lake or even filched from a landscaped parking lot, act as a decorative mulch to retain moisture. They also keep water from splashing up soil and creating gullies.

Do not water your new dish garden for a day, Tuttle warns. Cacti and succulents are susceptible to fungi when their roots have been disturbed. Give the roots some time to heal over before watering. And always pour water directly onto the stone mulch, not the soil, to avoid making little gullies. In the winter, water when the soil is dry; in summer, when nearly dry. Don't fertilize unless you want bigger plants. (The garden will have to be arranged every six months or year to compensate for varying growth rates of plants.) If the garden is moved outside, adjust it to the more intense

outdoor light by putting it outside two hours longer each day. Most succulents can tolerate only a half day of full sun.

A popular dish garden design is to imitate a real desert scene with miniature counterparts of large desert plants and with rocks that resemble desert scenery. Layered sedimentary rocks with sharp edges look like buttes; contorted, pitted and odd-shaped rocks suggest spectacular geological formations. Reds, browns, and yellows are desert colors.

Plant materials for succulent dish gardens are available at Saguaro Plants, 207 S. Ashley; Nielsen's, 1021 Maiden Lane; Wildlife Plants, Maple Village shopping center, and at other plant stores, florists, discount stores and sometimes even supermarkets.

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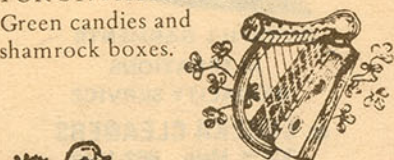
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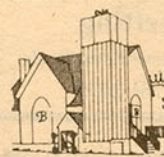
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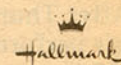


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